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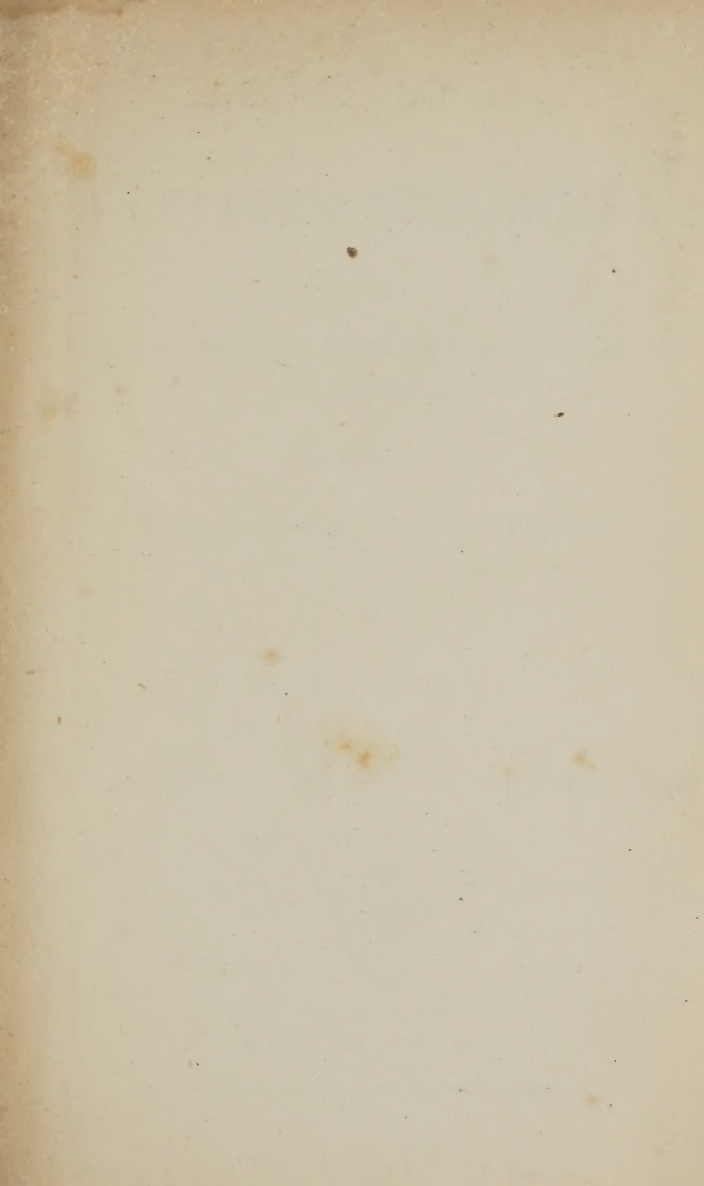
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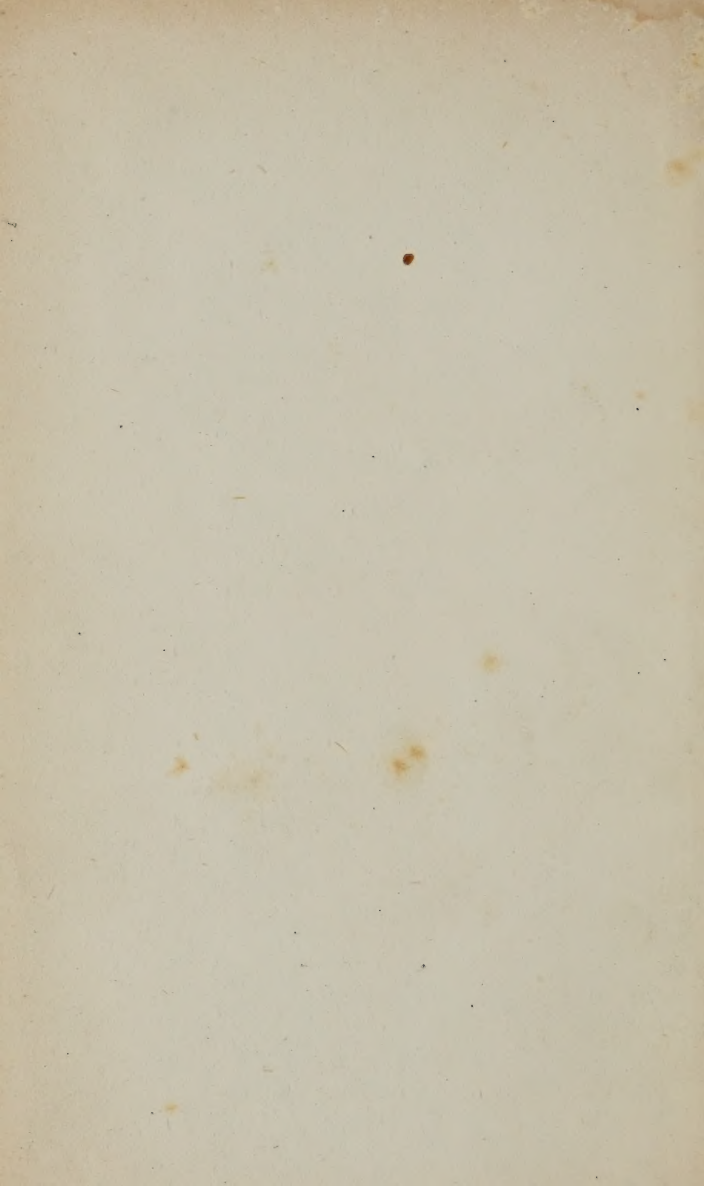
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THE
BAPTISTS EXAMINED;

OR,

COMMON SENSE ON BAPTISM, CLOSE COMMUNION,
AND THE BAPTISTS.

A DIALOGUE BETWEEN

A PRESBYTERIAN AND A METHODIST.

BY

J. B. PEAT.

'Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded.'—JESUS.

FOURTH EDITION.



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WILLIAM SHAW

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TO THE READER.

FOR a proper understanding of the following CONVERSATIONS, it is necessary to state that they are a common sense investigation of Baptism, Close Communion, and the Baptists, by two individuals, one of whom was formerly a Presbyterian, and the other a Methodist. They are not myths. The CONVERSATIONS are nothing more nor less than a relation of the opinions and experience of each, in a dialogue form. With three or four exceptions, every anecdote and incident in the book has been furnished by those personally acquainted therewith.

Having learned the truth, our Presbyterian becomes its earnest defender. To some, he may occasionally appear severe; but he is conscientious and sincere in his views. And as our Pedobaptist friends admit these to be a sufficient justification for an individual adopting what manner of baptism he sees proper, surely they will judge the Presbyterian by the same rule, and allow him the privilege of giving expression to his opinions in the way he thinks best. We know he has a warm and charitable heart, let his lips say what they may.

There are some peculiarities in modes of expression, and some repetitions of ideas and language, as is common in discussions of this kind; which the good sense of the candid reader will no doubt make allowance for.

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FIRESIDE CONVERSATIONS ON BAPTISM.

FIRST CONVERSATION.

Introductory.



METHODIST. "Good evening, brother E * * *," was the friendly salutation of Mr. C * * *, a neighbor, and a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, to Mr. E., a member of the Presbyterian Church.

PRESBYTERIAN. Why, good evening, brother C., I'm glad to see you. Walk in and take a seat. Hope you have come to spend the evening with us.

M. I shall be glad to do so; nay, I may say I have come for that very purpose.

And then, taking seats, the two neighbors commenced a conversation on miscellaneous matters, in which Mr. C. contrived to introduce the subject of baptism. It was evident that he had been thinking very seriously about it; and frankly acknowledged that of late he had been troubled somewhat in his mind on account of it. To which his Presbyterian friend replied:

P. Well, brother C., you are not alone in that matter. I find there are a great many troubled in the same way. I have been myself.

M. I understand you have been examining the subject; and I should like to hear your opinions in regard to it. So I have come to have a friendly conversation with you, if it is agreeable.

P. Certainly it is agreeable, and I shall be happy to give you my experience. Truth courts investigation, but error shrinks from the light. What is the cause of your difficulty?

M. Why, to come at once to the point, it puzzles me sorely to know how immersion, pouring, and sprinkling, can all be baptism. I have always admitted that immersion is baptism, because I found it in the Bible. But how pouring and sprinkling can be baptism, also, although I have been so taught to believe, is what I can not understand.

P. Neither did I at one time understand how immersion could be baptism. I heard so much from our ministers in favor of sprinkling, and so very little in favor of immersion, but much to condemn it, that I concluded that sprinkling was baptism beyond all doubt. But, as for immersion being baptism, it seemed to me very questionable at best.

M. Well, that is strange. For my part, I never could see how any one could doubt the truth of immersion, who was willing to take the plain statements of the Bible without the strange and curious interpretations of men.

P. To be frank, I took the teachings of men for the Word of God. When I read the Bible, it was more for the purpose of finding something to sustain sprinkling and oppose immersion, than to ascertain the truth.

M. That is too much the case with us all. We form opinions independent of the Word of God, and then try to make it sustain them. And thus we make our opinions the test of the truth of the Scriptures, instead of making the Bible the standard of our faith and practice.

P. Yes, I frankly confess it. We talk, as Protestants, of the Bible being our only rule of faith and practice, and yet, some of us, governed by our feelings, human wisdom, and expediency, allow these to control our judgment, and condemn or approve what they make wrong or right, without carefully examining whether they accord with the Scriptures. And yet a "Thus saith the Lord" is infinitely better than all the theories and contrivances of human wisdom, however ingeniously devised and plausible in appearance.

M. May I ask how you were led to investigate more thoroughly the subject of baptism? I have always believed you firmly established in your views, and not given to change; as one of the steady kind, not tossed about by every wind of doctrine.

P. Thank you for your kind opinion. I always prided myself on my stability of doctrine, and was not disposed to look with a favorable eye on those

who left our church, especially when they left on account of baptism. Somehow I could not help thinking "turn coat, turn coat;" if I did not say it. I was particularly fond of quoting some of our favorite expressions on such occasions, such as "indifferency," "non-essential," "baptism the answer of a good conscience," etc.; although, I must acknowledge, I was not very willing to let those satisfy their consciences who thought it their duty to be immersed! But now to answer your question. You know, as Methodists and Presbyterians, we hold that sprinkling, pouring, and immersion, are all baptism, and that these different and opposing modes were all instituted by Christ, and practiced by the Apostles."

M. Stop a while, brother E.; let me reflect. "All instituted by Christ, and practiced by the Apostles!" I'd like to see the proof. I've been looking for it some time, but yet I can't find it; though our friends say it is so. It must be hard to find, or we should have had it before now!

P. So would others like to see the proof. And then we declare that that mode of baptism which satisfies the conscience of the candidate is to him baptism!

M. Yes, I know we do. There was Mr. Dusty, a Congregationalist minister, who said it was no difference whether an individual were baptized with water, sand, or mud; and one of the strangest things of all was, a large portion of the audience did not see he was imposing on their credulity.

But, really, I have been at a loss to know how it could be so, though believing it. Paul thought he was doing God's service when he persecuted the Christians, yet he was condemned by Him for doing it. I may believe white is black, but that does not make it so. Simply believing a thing never made it a *truth*; neither can it make it right for us to practice it.

P. Nor can our honesty or sincerity of belief make a wrong right, or justify us in believing and practicing an untruth. And it often occurred to me, that as God instituted baptism, he must certainly have instituted the mode. How could he institute three modes so widely different as pouring, sprinkling, and immersion? Christ, as the head of the body, must have given his church an example of baptism, requiring of all obedience to the same. It was his exclusive prerogative to give doctrines and ordinances to his church; and no one has the right to substitute new things for, or refuse to obey, what he has commanded, or to repudiate his example. To do this, is to impugn the Divine wisdom, and make the opinions and notions of men superior to the wisdom of God.

M. "Repudiators of Christ's example!" Are you not a little severe, brother E.?

P. Probably I am. But is it not the truth? If Christ has given us an example of baptism, and we will not follow it, what is it less than repudiation?

Again. It occurred to me that as Christ had practiced and commanded, and as his disciples had baptized, so would they baptize others. It appeared strange and unnatural to suppose that after all this the disciples would go and practice something else.

M. Your conclusions are very reasonable. No wonder your mind was disturbed in looking at the subject in this common sense light. Strange I did not think of that myself.

P. Thus was I led on, step by step, from Christ and his disciples, unto the Apostle Paul. Here I asked myself, Was not his practice the same? Was there not uniformity of doctrine and practice among all? *He taught the same things every where, in every church.* Certainly there must have been uniformity among all the disciples, and in the primitive church, on baptism. The Apostles would not be likely to set aside the example and commandment of Christ, and repudiate their own example, and introduce and practice a variety of baptisms in the church.

M. How do you know, brother E., that the Apostle Paul taught and practiced the same things every where in every church?

P. Here is what he says: "I have sent unto you Timotheus, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church."—1 Cor. iv. 17. "Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances as I delivered them to you."—1 Cor. xi. 2. See, also, Rom. vi. 17.

Thus, you see, the Apostle was uniform in his teaching and practice.

M. These passages are conclusive, and have relieved my mind of a great difficulty.

P. To proceed. The question was then suggested to my mind, why should John and the disciples go to the trouble of going to a river, and select a place for baptism, "because there was much water there," and then take the candidates down into the water, when, as we are taught, a few drops would have answered the same purpose, and could have been obtained any where? Why should Philip take the Eunuch down into the water, and Paul and the Romans and Colossians be buried in baptism? To sprinkle was certainly the easiest method; and to go away to Jordan and to Enon, and *into the water*, to find water enough for that object, seemed altogether unnecessary and uncalled for. There was in it an apparent inconsistency—something that I could not understand; and the more I looked at it, the more I was surprised and confused. I tried to account for it in the fanciful ways so common among us, but still my mind was not satisfied.

M. For my part, I do not see how they can satisfy any reasonable mind. Why, the idea of going away to *a river*, and to a place *because there is much water there*, and *into the water*, to get a few drops to sprinkle on the head, is enough to make one laugh outright!

P. It did seem very strange to me: and I soon

discovered my ignorance on the subject of baptism. I understood but very little about it. My knowledge was superficial, my opinions preconceived, and based upon the teachings of others; and my feelings were sectarian, and bitterly opposed to immersion and immersionists. I had prejudged and condemned the case, without examining the testimony of the witnesses. As I have stated, I talked loudly about non-essentials, the inconvenience and even indelicacy of immersion, overlooking the commandments of God, and the practice of the Saviour and his Apostles.

M. That's the way with many of us. We charge the Saviour with establishing a non-essential ceremony, and both him and his disciples, and the primitive church with practicing an indelicate rite! What but an impure mind would ever think of indelicacy in seeing the burial of a believer in baptism with Christ?

[Here brother E. blushed, which, being noticed by brother C., he apologized by saying: "Excuse me, brother E., I meant no offence to you."]

P. No apology is needed, brother C. There is too much truth in what you say; and I can not but feel ashamed when I think of my presumption in calling that a non-essential and indelicate ordinance which Jesus practiced and commanded; and which the disciples, and so many eminently wise and pious Christians did, "both men and women." But, I must hasten. I had allowed John and the disciples

to go to Jordan, and others to the water, but would not let them go into the water, though the Bible said they did. Why they should all seek the rivers and the streams for baptism, never occurred to me. The grand symbolical meaning of baptism, as seen in the burial of a believer with Christ in the liquid grave, never entered my mind.

M. I am astonished. Why, that is one of the most impressive and beautiful features of immersion; and though a believer in sprinkling, yet I must admit that sprinkling, compared to immersion, in this sense, is a meaningless ceremony!

P. Yes, I see it now. I found the same state of things among my brethren. Their arguments, if they are worthy of being called arguments, were, like my own, all based on assumptions. But some were more inconsistent than myself; for while they admitted immersion to be baptism, they opposed it with a bitterness that was surprising.

M. That is surprising. I can not understand why some believers in immersion oppose it with so much earnestness. They must admit it to be of God, or they ought not to believe and practice it. If it is not of God, it is of man; and can not possibly be baptism; and thus they have no right to immerse. Admitting immersion to be of God, their opposition is really arrayed against him. One of our ministers labored three hours to convince an individual that immersion was not baptism, and then went directly and immersed a candidate!

P. What you have said is very true. And hence baptism is not an indifferent matter. It was not as indifferent a thing to be baptized as I had supposed. There must have been *a specific mode of baptism*. What that mode was, I resolved to ascertain as far as I could, by giving the subject a thorough investigation. My plan was this:—first, I took the Bible and read carefully all that it said on baptism, and then I got all the books I could find treating thereon, noting down all I deemed important on the subject, and deducing my own conclusions as I went along. My mind had received such a Pedobaptist bias, that I had not yet learned to trust the Word of God alone. My prejudices were all against immersion. Thus I went to work, digging, I may say, after the truth: and no California miner was ever more anxious and intent on finding gold, than I was to discover the true meaning of baptism.

M. That was a very fair and impartial way of investigation.

P. Not so very impartial after all; for while I only read one Baptist book, I examined a great many Pedobaptist authorities.

M. [Laughing heartily.] Then, of course, you came out of the investigation a thorough Pedobaptist.

P. You will see. But this much, however, I will say now: all the authors I read, who wrote previous to the present century, admitted immersion to have been the primitive baptism. They all

admitted that the ordinance had been changed; and that they only defended the change on the ground of indifferency and expediency.

M. That is all new to me. I was not aware that our friends have condemned themselves by admitting that the ordinance of baptism has been changed. How can they reconcile the practice of sprinkling with the admission that immersion was the primitive baptism? How can they reconcile the apparent contradiction between sprinkling, pouring and immersion, and contend that they are all baptism, and ordained of God? This, as I told you before, is what puzzles me.

P. Yes, and puzzles thousands more. I have found in my investigation that there is nothing too inconsistent for those to believe who cut loose from the anchorage provided by God, and drift into the open sea of human wisdom, policy, and expediency. For instance, since that time I have seen the Articles of Faith of a Congregational Church, which state that they "*receive and apply the ordinance of baptism AS INSTITUTED BY CHRIST, and practiced by the Apostles,*" and then sprinkle, pour, and immerse: thus telling the world, as plainly as language can tell, that Christ instituted for baptism all these opposing modes, and that the Apostles practiced them. And to this absurdity they solemnly subscribe.

M. Well, brother E., it is time for me to return home. And now, suppose we devote a few evenings

to a friendly investigation of the subject. I should like very much to do so. The fact is, I want to be satisfied in my own mind. If immersion is exclusively baptism, I want to know it; for as it now appears to me, I can not see how sprinkling, pouring, and immersion can all be baptism. There must have been one mode established by God, and practiced by Christ and his Apostles; and what that was, I want to know: for that, *and that alone*, must be the rule for the government of the church.

P. I shall be glad to join with you. Let us, like the Bereans, search the Scriptures, and see what they teach first; and then we can examine other authorities. So, if you will come on Monday evening, we will commence our investigations. Let us be as frank with each other as we have been to-night; for frankness and sincerity become those who are searching for the truth.

M. I shall be glad to do so. Say seven o'clock.

[So it was determined, and the two friends parted for the night.]





SECOND CONVERSATION.

In which the Meaning of the Word "Baptize" and the Practice of the Primitive Church are examined.



METHODIST. Good evening, brother E.

PRESBYTERIAN. Good evening, brother C., [shaking him cordially by the hand.]

I am glad to see you punctual to the time of meeting.

M. Really, I was so anxious to begin our investigation that I hardly knew how to wait till the hour came. So, if you have no objection, let us commence at once.

P. Well, let us do so. I would suggest, however, that we first see if we can determine the meaning of the word *baptize* before we enter upon an examination of the leading examples of baptism mentioned in the Scriptures.

M. Yes, let us examine that first.

P. I suppose you are aware that the New Testament was written in Greek, which was the language most generally understood in Judea, and the adjacent countries first visited by the Gospel. It was the language of the common people, as well as the

learned, and the sacred writers employed such words as the people well understood. Baptize, a Greek word, with an English termination, was a word commonly used among the Greeks, as the word *dip* is among the English now; and they knew its precise meaning. When the Apostles wrote and preached about *baptism*, the people knew what they meant. When they told them to be *baptized*, they knew they had to be *immersed*, for that alone was the meaning of the word in common use among them. It was a *particular word, with a definite meaning*: just as the words *immerse* and *dip* are used now. When we say, "Arise and be *immersed*," the people know distinctly what we mean.

M. Yes, that seems reasonable. If the speakers and writers knew the language of the people they were addressing, they would certainly employ such words as would convey their own meaning, and which the people understood. An Englishman would laugh at you if you were to talk of *DIPPING* by *sprinkling* or *pouring*.

P. And so would the Greeks have laughed at the Apostles if they had talked about *BAPTIZING* by *sprinkling* or *pouring*. When we say, "Mr. A. was *immersed*," the people are at no loss to understand the act performed. And so, when the Apostles said "be *baptized*," and when Paul wrote to the Romans and Colossians, "we are buried with him in *baptism*," the people were at no loss to understand their meaning. The Apostles *knew no modes of*

baptism: they never talk about MODES. We do, to accommodate our arguments to the people, because different modes have been introduced into the churches since their day; but they knew and practiced *nothing but immersion*. And hence, says Paul, there is “ONE BAPTISM.”

In all that is said of baptism in the Scriptures, you find no reference to *modes*. The Apostles and the whole church were a unit on this point. Besides, in all church history, you never see a doubt expressed about the validity of immersion. There is no controversy about its being baptism: but to sprinkling there has ever been a decided opposition. While we have to admit that there are clear and undoubted cases of immersion found in the New Testament, not one case of sprinkling can we find there, only by far-fetched inferences. Besides, as I will show, it is agreed by all our writers, that immersion was the general, if not the universal practice of the primitive church; as one has expressed it, it was the general rule, and if there was any sprinkling it was the exception.

M. But what of infant baptism? Do you say they did not sprinkle the children?

P. Let infant baptism rest for the present. We will reach it before we finish our investigations. So to return: the Greeks, who surely ought to understand their own language the best, uniformly say that *baptize* means to *immerse*, and never to sprinkle or pour. The Greek Church has always practiced

immersion, and does so to this day. A learned Greek, who wrote a book on the "Doctrine and Spirit of the Greek Church," says :

"The distinguishing feature of the institution of baptism is immersion, 'baptisma,' which can not be omitted without destroying the spiritual meaning of the sacrament; and without, at the same time, contradicting the etymological sense of the word by which it is designated.

"The Western Church has, therefore, gone astray from the imitation of Jesus Christ; she has frittered away all the sublimity of the outward sign; in fine, she has perpetrated an abuse, both of words and of ideas, in practicing *baptism* by *sprinkling*, the very mention of which is a ridiculous contradiction. In fact, the verb 'baptizo,' 'immergo,' has but one meaning. It signifies *literally and perpetually to plunge*. Baptism and immersion are therefore identical; and to speak of *baptism* by *sprinkling*, is the same as to speak of *immersion* by *sprinkling*, or any other like contradiction in terms."

M. Well, I should like to hear some of our scholars reply to this Greek writer. I suppose they would tell us that he did not understand his own language. It would be so much like them.

P. Now, if the Apostles were to write to our churches, stating they had been baptized, how could the churches understand their meaning? Would it not puzzle them to find out whether the Apostles were sprinkled, poured, or immersed? If Peter

were to call on Pedobaptists now to be baptized, would there not be quite an anxiety to know what he meant? "Which am I to do, Peter?" asks a troubled inquirer. "Your language is so very indefinite, I know not what you mean. Must I be sprinkled, poured, or immersed? As the case now stands, I do not know which to do."

Then, if Peter should condescend to reply, would he not say, "How can you suppose I would use a word with no definite meaning! I use one well understood by all the people. It has one meaning, and one meaning only, and that is immersion. Arise, and be baptized!"

M. It does seem strange that the Apostles would use a word meaning every thing in general and nothing in particular, as our friends say they have.

P. Very true. But how very different the case would be with a Baptist congregation. They would have no hesitation about Peter's language. Obedient to his call, the believing child of God would arise and be immersed.

M. I have no doubt of that. They are always ready to jump into the water.

P. Yes, more willing to go into the water than some of us are to follow the Saviour. Again: If *baptize* means to sprinkle, why did the Apostles use a different word to express *sprinkling*?

M. I was not aware that they employed a different word. What is it?

P. When they talk and write about *sprinkling*,

they use a word (*rantizo*) conveying that particular idea. They do not use the word *baptizo*. There is no misunderstanding or controversy about it. It means sprinkling alone. Why use (as we say they have) the word *baptize* for *sprinkling*, a word with a contrary meaning, when they had a word that particularly and exclusively meant *sprinkling*? When they tell us the people were *baptized*, if they were *sprinkled*, why not employ the same word which they use when talking about sprinkling at other times?

“Immerse, sprinkle, and pour, are three distinct ideas, *expressed by different words in all languages*. No man in his right mind would think of immersing an object, and saying he sprinkled it; or of sprinkling an object, and saying he immersed it. This remark is as applicable to the Greek as to the English.”

In the light of common sense we are logically forced to the conclusion that the Apostles meant nothing but immersion by baptize, or they would have used a different word to express it.

M. There is certainly great force in what you say.

P. To make it still more clear, I will here give you a few passages of Scripture where baptize and sprinkle occur. You can see at a glance the difference between them.

PASSAGES WHERE BAPTIZE AND
BAPTIZED OCCUR.

John did baptize (*egeneto baptizon*) in the wilderness.—Mark i. 4.

Baptize (*baptizo*) you with water.—Matt. iii. 11.

He that sent me to baptize (*baptizein*).—John i. 33.

And were all baptized (*ebaptizonto*) of him in the river of Jordan.—Mark i. 5.

Jesus was baptized (*ebaptisthe*) of John in Jordan.—Mark i. 9.

He that believeth and is baptized (*baptistheis*) shall be saved.—Mark xvi. 16.

And was baptized (*ebaptisthe*) himself and all his.—Acts xvi. 33.

And he baptized (*ebaptisen*) him.—Acts viii. 38.

And were all baptized (*ebaptisanto*) unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.—1 Cor. x. 2.

Buried with him in baptism (*baptismati*).—Col. ii. 12.

Baptizing (*baptizontes*) them in the name of the Father, etc.—Matt. xxviii. 19.

PASSAGES WHERE SPRINKLE,
SPRINKLED, AND SPRINKLING
OCCUR.

So shall he sprinkle (*yazze*) many nations.—Is. lii. 15.

Then will I sprinkle (*zarakti*) clean water upon you.—Ezek. xxxvi. 25.

Let Moses sprinkle it (*zerako*).—Ex. ix. 8.

Having had our hearts sprinkled (*errantismenoi*) from an evil conscience, and our body washed (*leloumenoi*) with pure water.—Heb. x. 22.

And sprinkled (*errantise*) both the book itself and all the people.—Heb. ix. 19.

Sprinkled (*errantise*) likewise with blood both the tabernacle, etc.—Heb. ix. 21.

Blood of bulls, etc., sprinkling (*rantizousa*) the unclean.—Heb. ix. 13.

To the blood of sprinkling (*rantismon*).—Heb. xii. 24.

Sprinkling (*rantismon*) of the blood of Jesus Christ.—1 Pet. i. 2.

M. Why don't you give more illustrations of sprinkling? You don't mean to say that these are all you can find in the New Testament?

P. That is just the question asked of a Baptist, when preaching on baptism, by a Methodist. And as the Baptist replied, so I say, "If you will furnish the passages I will read them!"

These passages refer to sprinkling of blood alone. The idea of sprinkling *clear* water upon persons or things is not found within the lids of the Bible. Neither is there any case in the New Testament in which water was poured upon any person. Sprinkling is never used in allusion to the rite of baptism, neither is the word that means to pour. Sprinkling (*rantismen*) occurs but twice, Heb. xii. 24, and 1 Pet. i. 2; both refer to sprinkling of blood; so does Heb. x. 22.

Another word, *procheusis* (pouring), translated sprinkling, occurs but once, and then refers to blood.—Heb. xi. 28.

Sprinkling the *blood of Christ*, to take away "an evil conscience," is the only sprinkling referred to in the New Testament, after which the body is to be washed in pure water.—Heb. x. 22.

Now let us see what meaning Jesus gives to the word baptize, for he has, by his own baptism, defined its meaning. Suppose baptize meant several distinct modes, which I deny, would not Jesus have been baptized in the way he intended that others should be, and thus convey his meaning of baptism?

M. Certainly he would. It is unreasonable to suppose he would perform an act which was entirely opposed to his intention.

P. Just so. And thus being himself *immersed*, *immersion* was the expression of his understanding of *baptism*. He had a divine meaning to show by baptism, and that meaning found an infallible voice in immersion. As pouring and sprinkling could not convey it, he was neither sprinkled nor poured.

Thus has Jesus defined his own meaning of baptism, by being himself *immersed*. That is the *law* which he has given his church, and *pouring* and *sprinkling* are *violations* of that law.

Can common sense believe that the Saviour would be immersed, submit to a specific thing, and then use a word to describe it that implied something else? Can common sense believe that he would command his disciples to go and do that which he had himself submitted to, and which they had done under his own eye in the Jordan, in such words as might imply something else? He knew what he said, and he meant what he said. He had been immersed, and he commanded immersion.

M. That is all very true; and so the Apostles must have understood him.

P. Of course they did; and hence, it is not reasonable to suppose that after Christ had given them an *example of baptism* by being *immersed*, and commanded them to go and baptize, in language they all understood, that they would go and disre-

gard his example, and violate his commands. Nor is it reasonable to suppose, that after being immersed themselves, they would turn round, some to immersing, some to pouring, some to sprinkling, and still others to denouncing baptism as an unnecessary ordinance, according to the whims of the people, as we do. No, my dear friend, we do them great injustice by all such weak and vain suppositions. I tell my servant to go and plow my field. He knows what plowing means, for he has seen me use the instrument. Can common sense suppose that he would pass by the plow and take the harrow, and then call it plowing?

M. No; common sense would prevent him from doing such a foolish thing. But why did not King James' translators translate the Greek word baptize into English? If it means to sprinkle, or to pour, why not thus translate it? If I believed it meant to sprinkle, I should have no hesitancy in saying so. If I were to ask to be sprinkled, I certainly should not use a word that might mean something else. It appears very strange and suspicious.

P. Because they were prohibited by the King. That is one of the words he would not allow them to translate, for fear of disturbing the faith and practice of the Church of England. And it is to be feared that many, in order to keep their churches from being disturbed now, oppose the translation of the word.

M. Well, I wonder if that is not one reason why they won't have a new translation of the Bible now!

One of our ministers, brother E., told his congregation that baptize was a *generic* term, as *ride*. Now, said he, a man may ride on horseback, in a wagon, or in a carriage.

P. Yes, and on a *rail*, too; yet you would rather not see your son ride in that way. But suppose you had but one way of riding, and you were to tell him to ride to the village, what would he understand?

M. Why, of course, that he should ride that way.

P. Apply the illustration to baptism. The Saviour had but one way of baptizing; and, as I have said, when he commanded his disciples to go and baptize, they knew what he meant.

I once heard a minister say that baptize was like the verb *to reap*. "Why, brethren," said he, "we can reap with a sickle, scythe, or reaper!"

M. As to that matter, he might have added a jack-knife!

P. And very appropriately. But his illustration, as applied to baptism, is all nonsense; and his conclusion drawn from a wrong premise. *Baptize* is not a *generic*, but a *SPECIFIC* word. It means nothing but immersion. But suppose you had but one way of reaping, and knew but one way, and that was sickling, you would not be likely to tell your son to go and use a *reaper*. Such ministers assume for granted what they ought first to prove. Let them

first prove that Christ *had and commanded several modes of baptism*, and that *the Apostles practiced them* — let them *prove that baptize is a generic and not a SPECIFIC word*. Until they do this, they only show to the world their own ignorance, and common sense rejects their illustrations as erroneous and foolish.

Thus the word *baptize* means *immersion*, and nothing else; and when the Bible speaks of baptism it is in that sense. When the Saviour commanded his disciples to “go into all the world,” and preach the Gospel and baptize, and to teach the people to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded, he knew what the word meant, and they went forth with a definite understanding of what was required of them, and uniformly taught and practiced in obedience thereto.

Says a writer: “Positive precepts are always definite, and enjoin the observance of certain outward acts and ceremonies: under the Law, circumcision, the passover, and the numerous injunctions of the Levitical code: under the Gospel, Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Positive precepts prescribe the mode of action, and any deviation from that mode is an act of disobedience, and may nullify the procedure. If in the purifying ceremony of the law, wherein a bunch of hyssop was to be dipped in the water, in order to sprinkle the unclean person, another kind of shrub or tree had been used; and if, instead of dipping it in the water they had poured

water upon it—the ceremony would have been null and void, and the person would have remained unclean. God had ordered hyssop to be used, and he had ordered hyssop dipped in the water. Any departure from this command vitiated the whole.

“So of baptism. If the Lord Jesus commanded believers to be baptized, then the baptizing of unbelievers, or of persons unable to believe, is not Christian baptism. If baptism be immersion, then sprinkling or pouring is not baptism. If baptism be sprinkling or pouring, then immersion is not baptism.

“The will of Jesus governs the matter. If he said ‘immersion,’ then sprinkling is wrong, and sprinkled persons are unbaptized. If he said ‘sprinkle,’ then immersion is wrong, and immersed persons are unbaptized.”

But I see it will be impossible to finish this subject to-night, so let us defer it for another conversation.

[To which the Methodist consented, and they parted to renew the subject the next evening.]



THIRD CONVERSATION.

Same Subject Continued.

THIS evening brother C. was early in attendance, when Mr. E. soon commenced the conversation by saying: "Well, brother C., let us now resume the subject commenced last evening."

M. Yes, let us do so. You have excited my curiosity, and I am anxious to hear more about the meaning of the word baptize; and to see how you can prove that immersion was the practice of the primitive church.

P. To begin, then, I will now furnish you evidence from learned authors.

In the first place, thirty-two Greek lexicons and lexicographers unite in saying that baptize means to dip, to plunge, to immerse, and not one of them to sprinkle.

Forty-nine standard lexicons and encyclopædias, made by learned scholars of different denominations in different countries and in different ages, and covering the whole field of biblical literature, agree

in the testimony that baptize means to immerse, and none of them pretend that it means to sprinkle or pour.

Fifty-three eminent Pedobaptist scholars and divines give it the same meaning.

Every one of the fourteen translations of the Bible into the different languages, made during the first eight centuries after Christ, either give the word baptize itself, or translate it by a word which means to immerse, and never by one meaning to sprinkle or to pour.*

M. That is undoubtedly very striking proof.

P. It is; and in the next place, the Oriental or Greek Church, which now embraces Greece, Russia, and other large regions of country, has always held that immersion is the only perfect and Scriptural baptism, and still holds it. They call the Western Churches "sprinkled Christians." The Roman Catholic Church admits that immersion was the primitive baptism; and only justifies the substitution of sprinkling on her assumed right to change the ordinances, and make new ones for the church.

Says Cardinal WISEMAN, "We retain the name of BAPTISM, which means IMMERSION. We cling to names that have their rise in the fervor and glory of the past; we are not easily driven from the recollections which hang even upon syllables."

* See *Manual of Baptism*, by Rev. G. S. Bailey, D.D., containing more rich and valuable material on the subject of baptism, than any other work of so small a size. The reader will do well to procure it.

“The chief points of practice,” says Archbishop KENRICK, “on which changes have taken place in the course of ages, are the manner of administering baptism and the eucharist, as also penitential discipline. The solemn mode of baptism was originally by immersion. The church claims the right to regulate, at her just discretion, whatever regards the manner of administering the sacraments.”—*Appleton’s N. A. Cyclopædia, article Roman Catholic Church, p. 143.*

Immersion is the rule of the CHURCH OF ENGLAND. Says the rubric: “And then naming it [the child] after them [the sponsors], (if they chall certify him that the child may well endure it,) he shall dip it in the water warily and discreetly.” It is then added: “But if they certify that the child is weak, it shall suffice to pour on it.”

M. That reminds me of what JOHN WESLEY says in his Journal, published by our Book Concern, under dates of February 21 and May 5, 1736:

“Mary Welch,” says he, “aged eleven days, was BAPTIZED according to the custom of the first church, and the rule of the Church of England, by *immersion*. The child was ill then, but recovered from that hour.” “I was asked to baptize a child of Mr. Parker’s, second bailiff of Savannah; but Mrs. Parker told me, ‘Neither Mr. P. nor I will consent to its being dipped.’ I answered, ‘If you certify that your child is weak, it will suffice (the rubric says) to pour water upon it.’ She replied, ‘Nay,

the child is not weak, but I am resolved it shall not be dipped.' This argument I could not confute; so I went home, and the child was BAPTIZED by another person!"

And not long afterwards one Causton made a complaint against Mr. Wesley, before the grand jury of Savannah, Ga., charging him with having "broken the laws of the realm, contrary to the peace of our sovereign lord the king, his crown and dignity, by refusing to BAPTIZE Mr. Parker's child, otherwise than by *dipping*, except the parents would certify it was weak, and not able to bear it;" on which charge Mr. Wesley was presented to the court for trial, though twelve of the jury opposed the presentment, considering him 'justified by the rubric.'"—*Wesley's Works*, vol. iii., pp. 20, 24, 42. New York: 1840.

P. Mr. Wesley was right according to the rubric. And until the Reformation, both in England and Scotland, infants were immersed.

Again: More than sixty celebrated Pedobaptists declare immersion to have been the primitive baptism. I will give you extracts from a few of the most distinguished:

LUTHER.—"Baptism is a sign of death and resurrection. Being moved by this reason, I would have those that are to be baptized, to be *wholly dipped into the water, as the word imports* and the mystery does signify."*

Speaking of baptism as a symbol of death and the resurrection

* 1 Tom. II., p. 19.

Luther says: "On this account I could wish that such as are to be baptized, should be *completely immersed into the water*, according to the meaning of the word and the signification of the ordinance, as also, without doubt, it was instituted by Christ."

CALVIN.—"The very word *baptize*, however, signifies to *immerse*; and it is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient church."*

Again, on John iii. 23, and comments on Acts viii. 38: "From these words it may be inferred, that baptism was administered by John and Christ, by plunging the whole body under water. Here we perceive how baptism was administered among the ancients; for they immersed the whole body in water."

MOSHEIM.—"Jesus himself established but two rites, which it is not lawful either to change or to abrogate: viz., Baptism and the Lord's Supper."†

"In this century (the first), baptism was administered in convenient places, without the public assemblies; and by *immersing the candidates wholly in water*."‡

In the second century "the candidates for it were *immersed wholly in water*, with invocation of the sacred *Trinity*, ACCORDING TO THE SAVIOUR'S PRECEPT."§

NEANDER.—"Baptism was originally administered by *immersion*, and many of the comparisons of St. Paul allude to this form of its administration. The immersion is a symbol of death, of being buried with Christ; the coming forth from the water is a symbol of a resurrection with Christ, and both taken together represent the second birth—the death of the old man and a resurrection to a new life."||

"In respect to the form of baptism, it was in conformity with the original institution, and the original symbol, performed, by

* *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. By John Calvin, vol. II., p. 491. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication.

† *Institutes of Ecclesiastical History*. By John Lawrence Von Mosheim, D.D., vol. I., p. 84, sec. 1. New York: Harper & Brothers.

‡ *Ibid*, p. 87, sec. 8.

§ *Ibid*, p. 37, sec. 13.

|| *The History of the Christian Religion and Church*. By Dr. Augustus Neander; p. 197. Philadelphia: James Campbell & Co.

immersion, as a sign of entire *immersion* into the Holy Spirit, and of being entirely penetrated by the same.—*Ch. History*, vol. i., p. 110.

“On the original rite of baptism there can be no doubt whatever that in the primitive times the ceremony was performed by *immersion*. * * * The practice of immersion, in the first centuries, *was, beyond all doubt, prevalent in the whole church.*”*

KNAPP.—“Immersion is peculiarly agreeable to the institution of Christ, and to the practice of the Apostolic Church, and so even John baptized, and *immersion remained common for a long time after*. It would have been better to have adhered generally to the ancient practice, as even Luther and Calvin allowed.”†

STORR AND FLATT.—“The disciples of our Lord could understand his command in no other manner than as enjoining *immersion*; for the baptism of John, to which Jesus himself submitted, and also the earlier baptism (John iv. 1) of the disciples of Jesus, were performed by *dipping the subject into cold water*, as is evident from the following passages: Matt. iii. 6—‘Were baptized in Jordan;’ v. 16—‘Jesus ascended out of the water;’ John iii. 23—‘Because there was much water there.’ And that they actually did understand it so, is proved partly by those passages of the New Testament which *evidently allude to immersion*: Acts viii. 36, 39; xvi. 12–15; Rom. vi. 4; Col. ii. 12. * * * It is certainly to be lamented that Luther was not able to accomplish his wish with regard to the introduction of immersion in baptism.”‡

WINER, THOLUCK, HAHN, AUGUSTI, and JACOBI say, “The whole body was immersed in water.”

BEZA, the learned associate and colleague of Calvin, at Geneva, says, “Christ commanded us to be baptized, by which word it is certain immersion is signified.” * * * “To be baptized in water signifies no other than to be immersed in water, which is the external ceremony of baptism.”

* See Neander's Letter to Rev. Wm. Judd. Judd's Review of Prof. Stuart, p. 194.

† *Lectures on Christian Theology*. By George Christian Knapp, D.D., Prof. of Theology in the University of Halle. Translated by Leonard Woods, Jr., D. D., Theological Seminary, Andover, Mass.

‡ *Biblical Theology*, translated from the works of Profs. Storr and Flatt. By S. S. Schmucker, D. D., Prof. of Theology in the Theol. Seminary of the General Synod of the Ev. Lutheran Church, Gettysburg, Penn., pp. 513–516.

MELANCTHON, the companion of Luther—"Baptism is an entire action, to wit: a dipping," etc.

SHERLOCK. — "Baptism, or our *immersion* into water, according to the ancient rite of administering it, is a figure of our burial with Christ, and of our conformity to his death, and so signifies our dying to sin, and walking in newness of life."

WADDINGTON. — "The ceremony of *immersion*, the oldest form of baptism."

DR. REES. — "Baptism, in theology; formed from the Greek baptizo, of bapto, I *dip* or *plunge*, a rite or ceremony. * * * In the primitive times this ceremony was performed by *immersion*."

GREENFIELD, who declared that he was "not a Baptist, nor the son of a Baptist," but who was a remarkable linguist, says: "The term *immerse*, or what is equivalent to it, appears the only term which can be properly employed as a translation of the Greek word *baptizo*."

JEREMY TAYLOR. — "The custom of the ancient churches was not *sprinkling* but *immersion*; in pursuance of the sense of the word (baptize) in the commandment, and the example of our blessed Saviour."

DR. DEWETTE, a learned author, and translator of the Bible into German. — "They were *baptized*, IMMERSED, *submerged*. This is the proper meaning of the frequentative from *bapto*, to *immerse*. (John xiii. 26.) And so was the rite according to Romans vi. 3."

DR. M. G. BUCKNER. — "In the first times persons to be baptized were *immersed*; while at the present day they are only *sprinkled* with water."

DR. BENDEL. — On "*much water*," John iii. 23: "So the rite of *immersion* demanded."

JOHN D. MICHAELIS, Chancellor of the University of Gottingen. "The external action which Christ commanded in baptism, was *immersion* under water. This the word *baptizo* signifies; as every one who knows the Greek will answer for. The baptism of the

Jews was performed by *immersion*; so also was the baptism of John (John iii. 23;) and there is no doubt whatever that the first Christians baptized in *the same manner*."

Says CURCELLAEUS, an eminent minister and a renowned scholar, Professor of Divinity at Amsterdam, in the seventeenth century: "Baptism was by *plunging* the whole body into water, and not by sprinkling a few drops, as is now the practice. *Nor did the disciples, that were sent out by Christ, administer baptism afterward in any other way.*"

Dr. ANTHON, the most extensive editor of classical literature in America, and Professor of Greek in Columbia College, New York, says: "The primary meaning of the word is to dip or immerse, and its secondary meanings, if it ever had any, *all* refer in some way or other to the same leading idea. Sprinkling, etc., are entirely out of the question."

Dr. CHALMERS, Presbyterian, on Rom. vi. 4: "The original meaning of the word baptism is immersion; and though we regard it is as a point of indifferency whether the ordinance so named be performed in this way or by sprinkling, yet we doubt not that the prevalent style of administration in the Apostles' days was by an actual submerging of the whole body under water."

M. Stop, brother E., I can't help but interrupt you here. I see you are quoting from Presbyterian authors. Why, I heard the other day a Presbyterian declare we couldn't find immersion in the Bible.

P. He must certainly have been very much in the dark, for some of the ablest scholars among the Presbyterians unequivocally declare immersion to have been the primitive baptism. To proceed:

Dr. GEORGE CAMPBELL, a celebrated Presbyterian divine of Scotland, and President of Marischal College—"The word *baptizein*, both in sacred authors and in classical, signifies *to dip, to plunge, to immerse*. It is always construed suitably to this meaning."—*Notes on New Testament*, Andover, vol. ii., p. 20.

Dr. MACKNIGHT, twenty years Moderator of the Presbyterian General Assembly of Scotland.—“In baptism the baptized person is buried under water,” etc.—*On Epistles*, vol. i., p. 259.

Rev. JOHN WESLEY, in a note on Romans vi. 4, “We are buried with him,” says, “Alluding to the ancient manner of BAPTIZING by immersion.”

Rev. JOSEPH BENSON, in his commentary, adopts Mr. Wesley’s language as his own, and says: “Therefore, we are *buried* with him.’ Alluding to the ancient manner of BAPTIZING by immersion.”

CHAMBERS’ CYCLOPÆDIA.—“In the primitive times this ceremony (baptism) was performed by immersion, as it is to this day in the Oriental churches, according to the original signification of the word.”

BAXTER.—“It is commonly confessed by us of the Anabaptists, as our commentators declare, that in the Apostolic times the baptized were dipped over head in water.”

WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY OF DIVINES, consisting of fifty eminent ministers, in Annotations on Rom. vi. 4, “‘Buried with him in baptism.’ In this phrase the Apostle seemeth to allude to the ancient manner of baptism, which was to dip the parties baptized, and, as it were, bury them under water.”

Prof. STUART, of Andover Theological Seminary, “*Bapto* and *baptizo* mean to dip, plunge, or immerse into any thing liquid. All lexicographers of any note are agreed on this.” Again: “The passages which refer to immersion are so numerous in the Fathers, that it would take a little volume merely to recite them.” * * * “But enough. ‘It is,’ says Augusti, ‘a thing made out,’ viz., the ancient practice of immersion. So, indeed, all the writers who have thoroughly investigated the subject conclude. I know of no one usage of ancient times which seems to me more clearly made out. I can not see how it is possible for any candid man, who examines the subject, to deny this.”—*Stuart on Baptism*, pp. 51, 147, 149.

P. It is enough. The evidence is full and complete. These are all Pedobaptist authors. Are you satisfied?

M. You have presented a most formidable array of authors, and they generally testify in a frank, unequivocal manner. But are not some of these learned men advocates of infant sprinkling? I had supposed that Calvin at least was strongly in favor of the sprinkling of infants. I can not understand all this. If I had heard a Baptist talk as you do, I should have thought he had garbled the statements of these eminent divines, and done as some very "liberal" Christians do when they quote the Scriptures.

P. I think you will hardly suspect me of unfairly representing these justly celebrated men; some of whom the Christian world has just reason to be proud.

M. No; I believe I should do you an injustice if I entertained any such opinion. But I am bound to believe that these men had some reasons for adopting sprinkling, and practicing it in their public ministrations.

P. The only reason they have ever given for changing the primitive baptism, for they admit the change, is, that it is a point of "indifferency" how a person is baptized. Two learned Episcopalians have the candor to say, "It must be a subject of regret, that the general discontinuance of *this original form of baptism* [immersion]—though perhaps neces-

sary in our northern climates—has rendered obscure to popular apprehension some very important passages of Scripture.”

M. Well, but Christ knew as much about our “northern climates” as we do now, when he commanded his disciples to go and baptize. That’s no reason for changing his ordinance.

P. Certainly not. If it is impossible, which I deny, to immerse in northern climates, God requires no impossibilities. Baptism is not essential to salvation. But he does require that nothing else shall be substituted for it.

Thus you see from the best authority that *baptize* means to *immerse*, and that immersion was the universal practice of the primitive church for nearly three centuries; and, with the exception of clinic baptisms, the uniform practice for over thirteen hundred years.

M. The proof you have given is certainly complete and overwhelming, and ought to convince every unprejudiced mind of the truth of immersion.

P. It has certainly convinced me. Why, Mr. Coleman himself, strong Pedobaptist as he is, has to confess in his *Ancient Christianity Exemplified*, “in the primitive Church, immediately subsequent to the age of the Apostles, this [immersion] was undeniably the common mode of baptism. The utmost that can be said of sprinkling in that early period is, that it was, in case of necessity, permitted as an exception to a

general rule. This fact is so well established, that it were needless to adduce authorities in proof of it."

M. Well, if immersion was the general rule, or common mode of baptism in the primitive church, and if it is the utmost that can be said of sprinkling in that early period, that in cases of necessity it was permitted only as an exception; why should we be required to abandon a certainty for an uncertainty? to give up a general rule for an exception?

P. A Pedobaptist's reply to your question would be, because it is more *convenient*, not right! Thus was immersion the practice of the primitive church.

[And thus concluded the Third Evening's Conversation.]





FOURTH CONVERSATION

John's Baptism.



FROMPTLY at the hour agreed upon, after the usual friendly greetings, the two neighbors entered upon the evening's examination.

P. To follow the plan adopted in my investigation, brother C., let us now look at the leading examples of baptism given in the New Testament.

M. That is the way I should like to proceed. These great governing examples will be sufficient for me, and must decide the question.

P. Let us first, then, examine John's baptism. And now let us see what the Scriptures say about the

MODE OF JOHN'S BAPTISM.

This we learn was immersion, for he baptized in the river of Jordan and in Enon. Read the passages:

“And were baptized of him IN JORDAN, confessing their sins.”—Matt. iii. 6.

“And were all baptized of him IN THE RIVER of Jordan, confessing their sins.”—Mark i. 5.

“Jesus was baptized of John IN JORDAN.”—Mark i. 9.

“And John also was baptizing in Enon, near to Salim, *because there was much water there.*”—John iii. 23.

Thus, you see, John baptized in Jordan, and in Enon, “because there was much water there.” Much water is the specified object for baptizing in Enon, and we may also say in the river of Jordan. Says a learned author, at one time a Presbyterian, “The use of the water is not left to conjecture. It is specifically mentioned: it was for the very purpose of baptism. If baptism had not been by immersion, there can be no adequate cause alleged for going to the river. Can sober judgment, can candor, can common sense suppose, that if a handful of water would have sufficed for baptism, they would have gone to the river? Many evasions have been alleged to get rid of this argument, but it never can be fairly answered.” Says JOHN CALVIN, in his comments on John iii. 23, and Acts viii. 38: “From these words it is lawful to conclude that baptism was celebrated by John and Christ by the *submersion of the whole body.*” Says the learned MICHAELIS, the “*baptism of John was by immersion.*”

M. So I believe. The idea of going to a river and to a place *because there is much water*, simply to

get enough water to sprinkle, is inconsistent and absurd.

P. It does seem strange and inconsistent that John, Jesus, and his disciples, should seek a river and a place of much water, merely to sprinkle. And that they should go *into the river*, simply for the same purpose, seems equally as strange. What Dr. DODDRIDGE says of the baptism of the Eunuch, is very applicable here: "It would be very unnatural to suppose that they went down to the water merely that Philip might take up a little water in his hand to pour on the Eunuch."

Of Enon, say two learned expositors, one a Congregationalist and the other a Lutheran (Dr. DODDRIDGE and Prof. OLSHAUSEN), "He [John] particularly chose that place because there was a great quantity of water there." "John baptized at Enon because there was deep water there, convenient for immersing."

M. Dr. ADAM CLARKE says, "That the baptism of John was by plunging the body * * * seems to appear from those things which are related of him," * * * "to which that seems to be parallel, Acts viii. 38—Philip and the Eunuch went down into the water," etc.

P. Mr. COLEMAN, in his "Ancient Christianity Exemplified," who has labored very hard to show that sprinkling is right, makes the following admissions, among others: "John and the disciples of

Jesus baptized in Jordan.” “The baptism of John was by immersion.”

M. But many of our friends contend that the Greek word *en* means *with*.

P. I know they do. Let us look at it. There is no doubt that the words *with water* ought to be translated *in water*. *With* is a mistranslation of the Greek preposition *en*. “This word means *IN* and not *WITH*, and is rendered by the preposition *in*, in almost every case in which it occurs in the New Testament. The instances in which this word occurs suffice to prove what I say. The Greek word *en* occurs nine times in this third chapter of Matthew, and it is rendered in the English version by the preposition *in* seven times, and the two exceptions relate to baptism, and then it is rendered ‘with.’ Now either it is rendered wrongly seven times or twice. A citation of the passages will enable you to determine whether it is proper to render them in each case by the term *with* or *in*. ‘In those days came John the Baptist, preaching *in* the wilderness,’ v. 1; ‘the voice of one crying *in* the wilderness,’ v. 3; ‘baptized of him *in* Jordan,’ v. 5; ‘think not to say *within* yourselves,’ v. 9; ‘whose fan is *in* his hand,’ v. 12; ‘*in* whom I am well pleased,’ v. 17.

“Now I think it would certainly create a smile were I to insist that the Greek word *en* should be rendered *with* in each of the above passages, for, in that case we should read, ‘*with* those days,’ ‘*with* the

wilderness,' 'baptized of him *with* Jordan,' etc.; and yet, I ask, why is it not just as proper to say, 'baptized *with* Jordan, as 'I baptize you *with* water,' 'he shall baptize you *with* the Holy Ghost,' when the Greek proposition is *en* in each passage? Evidently the proper translation is, 'I indeed baptize you *in* water—he shall baptize you *in* the Holy Ghost.' ”

In Matthew's Gospel the word *en* occurs two hundred and ninety times. Of these, it is translated two hundred and twenty-two times by *IN*, and ten times by *WITH*.

Dr. GEORGE CAMPBELL translated it "baptize in water."

WILLIAM TYNDALE, the martyr, translated it, "I baptize you in water, in token of repentance."

Dr. LANGE, the celebrated Lutheran scholar of Germany, whose notes have been recently translated into English by the distinguished Dr. SCHAFF, also a Lutheran, makes the following comments on Matthew, third chapter: "v. 6, 'AND WERE BAPTIZED, *immersed*, IN the Jordan confessing their sins.' Immersion was the usual mode of baptism and symbol of repentance." "V. 11, 'I INDEED BAPTIZE YOU IN (*en*) water (*immersing* you IN the element of water) unto repentance,' 'HE SHALL BAPTIZE or immerse you IN the Holy Ghost and *in* fire.' He will entirely immerse you IN the Holy Ghost as penitents, or if impenitent, he will overwhelm you with the fire of judgment."

P. Suppose I were to tell you that some of the citizens of Cincinnati had gone to the Ohio river to be baptized, what would you naturally infer?

M. That they had gone to be immersed, of course; for if they had wanted to be sprinkled, they could have found any quantity of water in the city for that purpose without going to the river.

P. They might have gone *to* the river, however, without going *into* it, although the supposition would be unfair. But if I were to tell you that the citizens of Cincinnati went to the Ohio river to be *baptized*, and were *baptized in the river*, you could have no reasonable doubt of their immersion.

M. Certainly not. That would be a common sense conclusion.

P. Equally plain is the account of John's baptism. They went to be baptized in the river Jordan. Baptize means to immerse, and that only. So they went to be immersed: that was their *object*. Then we are told they were baptized *in the river*. Thus they went *to the river*, with the *intention* of being *immersed*, and they were *immersed according to their intention*. Yet some of our friends will have it that they went *to*, and then *into* the river to be sprinkled! And a few will not allow them to go into the river at all.

M. Yes, and invent a hyssop branch for John to sprinkle them with. Why don't they use the branch of hyssop for sprinkling now?

P. Again: if I were to tell you that the Rev.

Mr. A. was baptizing in, or at, a certain place, "because there was much water there," what would you suppose governed his action in going there?

M. The "much water" of course. That is the reason assigned. As much water is necessary for immersion, and not for sprinkling, he went there to immerse; and as he was baptizing "because there was much water there," common sense tells me he was immersing.

P. Some of the opposers of immersion, however, have very fertile and fanciful imaginations. They have "the inventive faculties strongly developed;" and are "great" on curious contrivances and denying the Scriptures. One of them says, "Enon was not a place of much water." Another says, "It was the *quality* and not the *quantity* [of water] that determined John."

M. They both contradict the Bible. It says *there was much water there*. It is the QUANTITY, and not the *quality* of the water, the text mentions. Why did not the *quality* influence the disciples? The waters of Jordan were good enough in quality for *them*. If John preferred Enon to Jordan on account of the quality of the water; how is it that Jesus, who "made and baptized more disciples than John," should continue baptizing *in Jordan*? Did not Christ and the disciples have as great a liking for pure water as John?

P. Certainly they had. And "if it were said that a man had erected a 'merchant mill' on a cer-

tain stream BECAUSE *there was much water there*, most persons would say that he wanted much water for purposes of grinding." But some of our ministers would say, "You totally misconceive the man's object. He has built his mill on that stream, not because he needs the water to turn his machinery; but that those who 'encamp' at the mill may have water to drink, and perform their 'daily ablutions,' and that their 'beasts' may drink also!"

A Congregational writer says: "The water was not necessary for baptizing, but for drinking, ordinary washings, cooking—necessary not only for men, but asses and camels."

M. [Indignantly.] That is enough of such nonsense. They are determined to have it every way but the way the Bible teaches. And then to think of the "asses and camels!" He could not let the text alone as it reads, without thrusting them in! As if John had no other object in baptizing than to select a place for the accommodation of the asses and camels! It is astonishing how little *common sense* some doctors of divinity have! And they think we know no better than that!

P. "I can prove to you," said a wag one day to me, "that a man may baptize in a river, and not baptize in water." "How so?" I inquired. "Does not the Bible say John baptized *in the river Jordan*?" "Certainly." "Well, the Presbyterian author of 'Bible Baptism' says, 'The Bible never speaks of

baptizing in water!’ [P. 5.] So John must have baptized in a river without water!”

I once thought the Baptists paraded the poorest arguments and illustrations they could find in the writings of our authors against us. But I find they can do no better. They use the best we can furnish them, and we have no reason to complain. I know, says one, of a distinguished Presbyterian divine who maintains that John sat in a canoe in the middle of the river Jordan, and that, as the people waded in from either bank, he scooped up a little water, and poured it on their heads. I once heard a minister preaching on John’s baptism. He said that Palestine contained six millions of inhabitants, and that over three millions went to the Jordan to be baptized! And as it was impossible for John to immerse them, he had them arrayed along the river bank, and sent him along the front, dipping a branch of hysop in the water, and then sprinkling the multitude! Nicely done, was it not? A fine theory, woven in the loom of his imagination; and it is almost a pity to spoil it. But yet I could not help wondering where he found the three millions, and the sprinkling in the Bible; and how it could be said of Jesus that “he made and baptized more disciples than John!”

John baptized over three millions, says the Methodist, and Jesus more than John, says the Bible; so between them both, they baptized more disciples

than there were inhabitants in all the land of Palestine, men, women, and children counted in!

M. How ridiculous: and yet it seems to be a favorite illustration with some of our preachers. But it is certain that all the inhabitants of Judea were not baptized by John.

P. Yes; the evident meaning of Matt. iii. 5, 6, is, that people from all classes, and all places around, came to John to be baptized.

That John's baptism was by immersion there can be no doubt: that is evident from the meaning of the word baptize. And when God sent John to baptize, he sent him to immerse. "God gave him," says MATTHEW HENRY, "both his mission and his message, his credentials and his instructions." He did not leave the mode discretionary with John. He sent him to do a specific act, and employed a word with a definite meaning. Can we suppose that God would use a word with a variety of meanings, leaving it to John to conjecture how he was to baptize? No; and thus what God intended we see clearly from the word he used, which LUTHER, CALVIN, BEZA, and a host of learned men, say means to *immerse*.

Thus John, in obedience to the command of God, and with a definite idea of the language employed, baptized in the *river of Jordan*.

Now let me show you that John's baptism was the same as that practiced by the disciples in the presence of Christ, both in mode and object.

M. I have no objection, though you have a hard task before you.

P. Let us see. Tertullian, one of the Christian fathers, who wrote in the Christian era 204, says: "Neither is there any difference between them who John dipped in Jordan, and those whom Peter dipped in the Tiber." As Christ was baptized by John in Jordan, it is not reasonable to suppose that he would be immersed, and then authorize or countenance sprinkling by his disciples. And then, as John was baptizing in Enon, "because there was much water there," and the disciples in Jordan *at the same time*, under the authority of Jesus, it is not possible that one party would be immersing, and the other sprinkling. What one did, so did the other.

M. Are you certain that John and the disciples were both baptizing at the same time? For if they were, it is reasonable to suppose that the mode of one must have been the mode of the other; nay, may I not say, that the *object* of one must have been the object of the other. I should like to see the proof.

P. I see you anticipate; but here is the proof: "After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea, and there he tarried with them, and baptized. And John was also baptizing in Enon, near to Salim, because there was much water there." John iii. 23.

M. I remember the passage now; but I never saw it in the light you apply it before.

P. Now what kind of baptism was this by Christ? If Christian baptism, as some say, was only instituted after the resurrection, what can we call this baptism? Was Christ under the legal dispensation? If you say he baptized under the Christian dispensation, so did John. If under the legal, you deny the Scriptures. Both baptized at the same time. Was John baptizing in opposition to Christ, in a different way, and with a different object? You can not say that, or Christ would have condemned instead of approved John: certainly he would have done this, if John's practice and object had been in opposition to his. How could there be two different baptisms practiced at the same time? Or if you say that the Saviour baptized in the same way that John did, and then instituted a different mode with a different object afterward, then were the mode and object of John's baptism and his own alike wrong. So in denying the mode and object of John's baptism, you deny the mode and object of Christ's baptism; and have two opposing parties baptizing at the same time in two different ways, and with different objects.

Mr. COLEMAN says: "The truth seems to be that our Lord, on entering upon his ministry, permitted the continuance of John's baptism as harmonizing with his own designs. The import of the rite was the same, whether administered by John himself or the disciples of Jesus." And yet he affirms, with-

out proof, that Christian baptism, so called, was not instituted until after the resurrection !

M. I see no way of answering your arguments, or avoiding your conclusions. John's and Christ's baptism must have been the same in mode and object. But how comes it, that some of our writers say that Christian baptism was not instituted until after the resurrection ?

P. On the same principle that they make other curious and contradictory statements—without authority from the Bible. Says one: "The legal dispensation, * * * came to its close only in the death and resurrection of the Saviour, after which Christian baptism was instituted." Now see how he contradicts Jesus, who says: "The law and the prophets were *until John*; since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it."—Luke xvi. 16.

Christ never instituted baptism in the proper meaning of that word. If he did, I should like to have it pointed out in the Bible; for I can not find it there. His baptism was the same as John's, at least in mode. He *commanded* his disciples to go and baptize, and to teach the people to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded; but there is not the shadow of a warrant for saying that he then instituted baptism. Instituted means established, appointed, founded, enacted. These meanings are not found in the commission. Baptism was instituted and practiced by John and his disciples, before Christ

commanded the Apostles to go and baptize. When he commanded them to go and baptize, he simply ordered and directed them to continue doing what had been done by Him—not to do a new thing, but to do it more extensively. They were commanded to go and baptize all nations, the Gentiles as well as the Jews. He had baptized, and they must continue baptizing.

Dr. THEOPHILUS C. STORR, Lutheran Professor of Theology, in the University of Tübingen, says: “When the Lord commanded that disciples should be BAPTIZED (Matt. xxviii. 19), the Apostles, through those things which had gone before, could have understood nothing else than that men should be *immersed* in water; nor did they, in truth, understand any thing else but immersion, as is evident from the testimony of the sacred writings.”

M. Let me read the commission, brother E.
[Reads:]

“Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.”—Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

It must be as you say. I see no authority for a new ordinance in that.

P. Certainly not; and if Christ had instituted a new ordinance, with a different meaning, after his resurrection, we should certainly have had some record of it. Can common sense believe that our

Lord would institute another ordinance, and the sacred writers say nothing about it—that they would have remained silent about such an important fact? Thus it is self-evident that he did not institute a new ordinance: and when he commanded his disciples to go and baptize, it was simply that they were to go and continue doing that which they had been doing before under his authority. They knew what he meant by baptizing. He had defined his meaning of baptism, by being himself immersed.

Again: If Christ instituted a new ordinance, the old one must have been imperfect. Thus you charge him with using an imperfect ordinance. The baptism by Christ's disciples, you must say, was either right or wrong, lawful or unlawful. If right, why institute another? If wrong, you charge the Saviour with unlawful things.

According to our friends, the Pedobaptists, there were three different dispensations and kinds of baptisms.

1. John's, sanctioned by Christ.
2. The disciples', under the authority of Christ.
3. That instituted by Christ after his resurrection.

Thus you see how ridiculous we make ourselves in order to destroy the force of John's baptism, and to foist pouring and sprinkling on the people, contrary to the common sense teachings of the Scriptures. Why, John Calvin was compelled to say: "It is very certain that the ministry of John was precisely the same as committed to the Apostles.

For their baptism was not different, though it was administered by different hands; but the sameness of their doctrine shows their baptism to have been the same."

M. I must concede this point also. I see no authority for saying that Christian baptism was instituted by our Lord after his resurrection. Strange how we get notions into our heads without having a "Thus saith the Lord" for them!

P. Yes, very strange. Surely, if Jesus did institute a new ordinance of baptism after his resurrection, it would be easy to prove it. Let our friends give us the proof, and not depend on bare assertions. They say he was immersed, and authorized immersion by his disciples; now let them show us that he instituted a new ordinance with a different mode of administration. Give us the proof.

I will now, in conclusion, give you a brief summary of proof from the Scriptures, that John's baptism was Christian baptism.

1. John's baptism was ordained by God. John i. 33.

2. God sent John to baptize. John i. 6, 33.

3. The ministry of John was the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Mark i. 1.

4. The law and the prophets, or the old dispensation, ended at the coming of John. Then the kingdom of God, the new dispensation, was preached. Luke xvi. 16; Matt. xi. 13.

5. Christ approved and sanctioned John's baptism, and was baptized of him in Jordan. Matt. xi. 11.

6. John and Christ baptized at the same time. John iii. 23.

7. John preached repentance, warned the people to flee from the wrath to come, and taught them to believe on Christ. Acts xix. 4.

8. The Gospel kingdom commenced with the preaching of John. Luke xvi. 16; Matt. xi. 12, 13.

9. John was filled with the Holy Ghost. Luke i. 15.

Can any testimony be clearer and more conclusive? If John's baptism was not Christian baptism, what is it? If he did not preach the Gospel, pray who does?

M. It is certainly a strong and formidable array of proof, incontrovertible and conclusive to my mind. For as John was sent by God, being filled with the Holy Ghost; and as his ministry was the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and as he baptized Jesus, and preached repentance and faith in him;—it must have been a strange kind of baptism if it was not Gospel baptism!



FIFTH CONVERSATION.

The Baptism of Christ

BEING the subject for this evening's Conversation, Mr. E. commenced by saying: "Let us now look, brother C., at the history of the baptism of Christ. Having proved that the mode of John's baptism was immersion, of course Jesus was immersed."

METHODIST. Yes; but there are some things connected with Christ's baptism that I do not fully understand. So I had rather you would examine the whole narrative, if you have to introduce the mode of his baptism.

P. It will afford me pleasure; for there is something beautiful and impressive in the narrative as recorded by the Evangelists. Let us read the Scriptures. "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John to be baptized of him. But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus, answering, said unto him, Suffer it to be so now; for thus it be-

cometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered him.—Matt. iii. 13. [Thus] Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John *in Jordan*.—Mark i. 9. And Jesus, when he was baptized, *went up straightway out of the water*.—Matt. iii. 16. And, *straightway coming up out of the water* [Mark i. 10], and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased. And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age.”—Luke iii. 21–23.

Here you will observe, 1. That Matthew says Jesus went from Galilee to JORDAN to be baptized by John: and Mark says, he was baptized IN JORDAN. 2. Matthew says that Jesus when he was baptized *went up straightway out of the water*: and Mark, *straightway coming up out of the water*, etc.

Can language be plainer? Can the narrative be made more simple, clear, or more readily understood? Can an action be more definitely expressed? Need there be any reasonable doubts on the subject? Jesus first goes to Jordan, then goes INTO Jordan and is baptized, and then *straightway comes up out of the water*: or, as Dr. DODDRIDGE, the Congregational expositor, says: “ascended out of the water to the banks of Jordan.”

M. But, you know, some of our friends say that it means AT, and not IN, Jordan.

P. Yes; and for many a year they misled me

with this worse than a quibble, for it contradicts the Scriptures. Suppose a neighbor of ours, knowing the *object* you had in coming to my house this evening, was to say to another neighbor: "Mr. C. went to the house of Mr. E. last night to investigate the subject of baptism;" would not common sense infer justly that you came *into* the house? Your *object* governed your *action*. You came to investigate, and you came into my house. But you might not have come in after all. You might have stood hour after hour conversing with me at the gate; and I might have carried out the lamp and the many books we have been examining! But there is no such probability about Christ's example.* He went to be baptized, which means *immersion*. He went *to Jordan*, went *into Jordan*, and came up out of the waters of Jordan. His *object* was immersion, or he would not have gone *to Jordan*; and his *action* was immersion, or he would not have gone *into Jordan*. His object determined his action.

M. Yes, that is clear. These "might have beens" are great arguments with the opposers of immersion. They seem to prefer them to a "Thus saith the Lord." It appears strange that some will apply common sense to every thing else but to this, a scriptural and common sense view of the baptism of Christ. Thus far we agree on the mode of Christ's baptism. But was not his baptism *purification* and consecration for the priesthood? Did he not come

to fulfill all righteousness; and was not this required of a priest?

P. Certainly not. "Purify," says Webster, "is to cleanse from pollution ceremonially." What pollution had Christ to be cleansed of by John? He was free from sin, pure and holy. To say that he was purified, is to declare he was polluted—a sinner. And to say that the office of John was a purifier, is to say that he cleansed from sin. Again: if baptism was purification, then you make baptism a saving ordinance. So that insuperable objections stand in the way of the notion that Jesus was purified, and that John's baptism was purification.

Again: if you say that baptism was only figurative or emblematical of the purification of the soul by the blood of Christ, from sin, then, I ask you, how could the emblem apply to Christ? He was not guilty of the thing signified—he had no sins to wash away.

M. Yes, I believe all that. Christ had no sins to be purified from—he was not a sinner. But could not purification refer literally to the body?

P. No, not in this case. If John's baptism was the purification of the body, why did he require repentance and faith? These have to do with the mind. Again: if it was spiritual or emblematical purification, how could it, as seen above, apply to Christ? And, lastly, if to purify is to cleanse from pollution, then was the baptism of John a purification from moral defilement, a saving ordinance. If

you say it was “legal or ceremonial uncleanness, which disqualified a person for sacred services or for common intercourse with the people,” then, I ask you, how it could apply to Christ, for he was without spot or blemish?

But, you ask, was not Christ consecrated for a priest, and at baptism inducted into the priesthood? To this again I answer *no*.

M. You are very positive. Where is your proof? I hear our preachers talk so much about it, surely there must be something in it?

P. Well, have you not heard them talk as much about sprinkling being baptism? and you see how much truth there is in that. But here is the proof. Are you not aware that the priesthood was confined to the *tribe of Levi*; and that the laws of Moses concerning the priesthood had exclusive reference to that tribe?

M. No; I was not aware of that.

P. But so it is: and Christ not being of the tribe of Levi, forever settles the fact that he was not baptized into the priesthood. Paul says: “It is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning the priesthood.”—Heb. vii. 14.

M. That settles the fact. I can’t go behind these emphatic words.

P. Again: the order of the priesthood was changed. Christ was a priest after the order of Melchizedek, and not after the order of Levi, which you

can see by reading Hebrews vii. 11. Now if you can point out in the Bible that Melchizedek was a Levitical priest, and was purified by baptism into the priestly office, you will do more than all Biblical scholars have ever done!

The law of consecration for the priesthood you will find in Exodus, 29th chapter, and Leviticus, 8th chapter, as given by Moses. Please turn and read. [Reads.] Thus, you see, there is not a shadow of evidence that Christ complied with this law of consecration at baptism. If it had been applicable to him, he would certainly have fulfilled it, for he came to fulfill the law. Besides, he never claimed to be, and never pretended to exercise the functions of a priest.

The baptism of the Saviour did not take place under the law. There was no command of the kind in the law. It was an institution founded by John the Baptist, or rather by him who "sent him to baptize," and had nothing in common with the ordinances enjoined by Moses. The state of things then existing was altogether peculiar, in a religious point of view. John was acting under the authority of a special commission. He was the "messenger" of Jehovah, the "prophet" of the Highest, sent "in the spirit and power of Elias." Mal. iii. 1; iv. 5; Luke i. 17. Our Lord recognized and honored his mission, and in yielding to be baptized by him, though he had no sins to confess, exemplified that perfect holiness which was necessary to the completion of his own work. Obedience to John's baptism

was at that time a test of character; had the Saviour neglected it, he could not have affirmed that he “did always the things which pleased” his Heavenly Father. He obeyed—“and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, saying, ‘This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’” Matt. iii. 16, 17.

M. From reading the law of consecration, and the narrative of Christ’s baptism, I see no way of avoiding your conclusion.

P. Nor can any one who fairly examines the Scriptures. But if Christ had been desirous of officiating as a priest, he would not have chosen John to induct him into the priest’s office. We have *not the slightest proof that John was ever consecrated himself to that work.* So you see all Scripture is against you.

M. So I see. And here I have been misled by the teachings of our preachers again. I have heard them talk so much about Jesus being consecrated for the priesthood, that I have taken their word for it, without examining the Scriptures. After this I will try and read the Word of God more; and depend less on the teachings of men.

P. That’s a good resolution; one that I wish I had practiced more myself.

M. But what do you say Christ was baptized for? It was certainly not for the priesthood, nor for repentance; for “being free from sin, he could not repent; and he needed no forgiveness, regeneration, or newness of life.”

P. There are various opinions with regard to it; but I will answer your question for myself, as far as I can. After the most thorough investigation of the subject I have been able to make, I have arrived at the following conclusions:

1. Christ's baptism was, as he tells us, "to fulfill all righteousness," or a righteous obligation and requirement. Baptism was an ordinance appointed by God for the new, or Christian, dispensation. Hence the ministry of John, who "was filled with the Holy Ghost," was "the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." Mark i. 1. John had a divine and special warrant from heaven to baptize, for he was sent by God. Christ knowing all this, he, to show his obedience to the divine requirement, came to John to be baptized of him in Jordan. John felt his inferiority to Christ, and that he needed to be baptized by him, instead of baptizing the Master, and hesitated to comply. Then Jesus replied: "Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." And he baptized Him. Thus was the law of baptism fulfilled by Christ.

2. Baptism, we have stated, was instituted for the church of Christ—a new ordinance for a new dispensation. Now, as baptism was required of the Head, so it is of the body, the church. And as Jesus, the Head, was baptized, so must the church, his body, be baptized. And thus the Head and the body are alike buried in baptism.

3. Christ was baptized as our example, or as an

example of obedience to the command of God; and thus has become our pattern in baptism. Thus, says an eminent Presbyterian commentator, (Dr. Scott,) "We never find that Jesus spake of himself in the plural number; and it must therefore be allowed that he meant John also, and all the servants of God in a subordinate sense. It became Christ as our surety and example to perfectly fulfill all righteousness; it becomes us to walk in all the commandments and ordinances of God, without exception, and to attend on every divine institution, as long as it continues in force. Thus far Christ's example is obligatory."

"The pattern of Christ and his Apostles," says Mr. POLHILL, "is more to me than all the human wisdom in the world."

M. So it should be to every Christian. If we love Him, we shall keep his commandments.

P. Yes; and thus it becometh us to fulfill all that our Saviour requires of us. He has said, "follow me." Why follow the devices of men? He is our great Captain and Leader—our divine Exemplar: and here he has given us an impressive and beautiful example to follow—an example of baptism. He was immersed, and that is what he meant by baptism; and he requires that we be immersed. The act which he performed is the same that he demands of us. We need not hesitate about mode, for we see what that was by his example. And then, it is a distinguished privilege, and a great honor, to

be "buried with him in baptism;" and should prompt us to gratitude and obedience. Certainly no such consolation and approval of conscience can arise from being sprinkled. No wonder the Baptists can rejoice at their baptism, and sing,

"With willing hearts we tread
The path the Saviour trod;
We love the example of our Head,
The glorious Lamb of God!"

It is for you and me, my brother, to be obedient to his commandment, and follow Him as our example of baptism.

"Thou hast said, exalted Jesus,
Take thy cross and follow me:
Shall the word with terror seize us?
Shall we from the burden flee?
Lord, I'll take it,
And rejoicing follow thee!"

4. The baptism of our Lord was, also, emblematical of his burial and resurrection. So the Apostle Paul understood it. To the Romans he says: "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore WE ARE BURIED with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead, by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been PLANTED TOGETHER in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."

—Rom. vi. 3-5. “Buried with him in baptism.”—Col. ii. 12.

Thus, says Dr. MACKNIGHT, “Jesus submitted to be baptized, that is, buried under the water by John, and to be raised out of it again, as an emblem of his future death and resurrection.”

The Lord’s Supper shows us in emblem the broken body and shed blood of Christ; but leaves the church only in possession of his dead, unburied body. Immersion shows us his burial, resurrection, and ascension. Thus in the two ordinances we have united and manifested the great and solemn facts in the life of Christ our atonement.

The ordinances of the Lord’s Supper and Baptism stand out as two grand pillars of truth, enduring as long as time shall last, erected by the infinite wisdom, power, and goodness of God, appealing to all ages to come as witnesses of the fundamental doctrine of the Christian religion — *Christ crucified*. The Lord’s Supper shows forth his crucifixion and death until his coming again — his shed blood and broken body; and Baptism his burial and resurrection from the grave. And whenever the Supper is partaken of there comes through it to the ear of faith the voice of Jesus, saying, “*This do ye in remembrance of me.*” And then at baptism, faith not only sees Christ going down into, and coming up out of, the river of Jordan, but also going down into the grave, and coming out as a Conqueror, rising in majesty and glory, the Lord our Righteousness, triumphant over the power

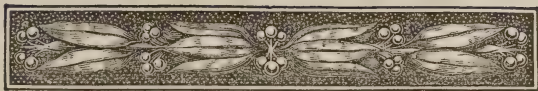
of death. Thus, when the Christian partakes of the Supper, and follows Christ in baptism, he presents to the world two great and incontrovertible arguments in proof of a crucified and risen Saviour.

M. What is the opinion of the learned on the mode of Christ's baptism?

P. The Apostle Paul says it was a burial — "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism" — "buried with him in baptism." — Rom. vi. 3, 5; Col. ii. 12. The learned have almost universally conceded it to have been an immersion. We might fill a small volume with the proof. Thus

"JESUS WAS BAPTIZED BY JOHN IN JORDAN."





SIXTH CONVERSATION.

The Baptism of Paul.



THE example of Paul being set apart for this evening's investigation, Mr. C. commenced by reading Romans vi. 3, 5: "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." Also, Colossians ii. 12: "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God," etc.

P. Thus Paul speaks for himself, and tells us that he was buried with Christ in baptism, as were also the Romans and Colossians, no doubt a goodly number. "This passage," [Rom. vi. 4.] say two eminent Episcopalian writers, "can not be understood unless it is borne in mind, that the primitive

baptism was by *immersion*.” JOHN WESLEY has to admit that there is an allusion here to the ancient manner of baptizing by *immersion*. And NEANDER, the celebrated church historian, says: “When St. Paul says that through baptism we are buried with Christ, and rise again with him, he unquestionably alludes to the symbol of dipping into, and rising again out of the water.”

Says Dr. CHALMERS, in his Lectures on Romans, p. 152: “The original meaning of the word baptism is immersion, and though we regard it as a point of indifferency, whether the ordinance so named be performed in this way or by sprinkling — yet we doubt not that the prevalent style of the administration in the Apostles’ days, was by an actual submerging of the whole body under water. We advert to this, for the purpose of throwing light on the analogy that is instituted in these verses. Jesus Christ by death underwent this sort of baptism — even immersion under the surface of the ground, whence he soon emerged again by his resurrection. We, by being baptized into his death, are conceived to have made a similar translation. In the act of descending under the water of baptism to have resigned an old life, and in the act of ascending to emerge into a second or new life,” etc.

“The evident design of the Apostle in these passages, is to enforce the duty of a holy life and conversation. ‘Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead

to sin live therein?" Our very baptism teaches us to live no longer to sin. We have died to sin, therefore we are *buried with Christ by baptism* into death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead, even so we also should walk in newness of life. When one has died, he is afterward buried. Our conversion was our death to sin. Our baptism was our burial, to testify in the most solemn and impressive manner that we had renounced the world and sin, and henceforth we were to live a new life of holiness. Our *immersion* is a solemn burial, showing to the world that we have died to sin. Our *emersion* is a resurrection, showing by a beautiful and impressive emblem that we are to walk in newness of life." And thus immersion, and immersion alone, can truly symbolize a death unto sin, and a resurrection to a life of righteousness; and is the only true interpretation of the language of the Apostle. And hence, say Messrs. CONYBEARE and HOWSON, "It is needless to add that baptism was (unless in exceptional cases), administered by immersion, the convert being plunged beneath the surface of the water to represent his death to the life of sin, and then raised from this momentary burial, to represent his resurrection to the life of righteousness."

M. Yes, in immersion we have a beautiful symbol that sprinkling knows nothing about. What do learned authors say of Paul's baptism?

P. Perhaps there never was a greater unanimity of opinion among eminent Christian scholars and

divines, on any subject, than there is on these passages. I have read over eighty learned authorities, and they unanimously concede them to mean *immersion*; among whom I may mention CALVIN, LUTHER, CHALMERS, ADAM CLARKE, TYNDALE, BURKITT, WHITEFIELD, OLSHAUSEN, NEANDER, MOSHEIM, DODDRIDGE, MACKNIGHT, WESLEY, BENSON, CONBYEARE, and HOWSON — Lutherans, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Methodists, and Episcopalians.

M. That is certainly a great array of authorities. I remember it is true of WESLEY, BENSON, and CLARKE. Mr. WESLEY says, “*buried with him*,” alluding to the ancient manner of baptizing by *immersion*. And Mr. BENSON adopts Mr. WESLEY’s words. While Dr. CLARKE says: “They receive baptism as an emblem of death, in voluntarily going under the water, so they receive it as an emblem of resurrection unto eternal life, in coming up out of the water.”

P. And yet your Tract Society has published a tract, whose title is “Twenty-four Facts on Baptism,” in which the writer unblushingly affirms that “it is a fact that ‘being buried with him by baptism into death,’ refers only to the baptism of death. Our Baptist friends think they see water in it; but I see nothing but death.”

M. How strangely contradictory some of our preachers are! Here this wise man of ours has the boldness to contradict his fathers in the Gospel. I see immersion in water in the passage, say WESLEY,

WHITEFIELD, BENSON, and CLARKE. But, says he, "I see nothing but death" in it!

P. It is very strange if all these celebrated writers were mistaken. If they were Baptists, some might have a little doubt of the correctness of the interpretation. But as they were all members of Pedobaptist churches, they would not be likely to testify against themselves, unless the text absolutely required it.

M. I hardly think that's fair, brother E. I do not see why a Baptist can not be as impartial in his testimony as a Pedobaptist. He certainly has no ease, nor any less cross-bearing to gain, by advocating immersion.

P. I don't know but what I did our Baptist friends injustice. A little of the old leaven of antipathy to them will yet sometimes manifest itself when I do not think of it.

M. It is strange, as you say, if all these witnesses are mistaken.

P. And it is equally strange that the Apostle, and all the Romans and Colossians, should go to the trouble of being immersed, if sprinkling would have done as well. Common sense can not believe it. It would be just as reasonable to expect a Congregationalist of Chicago, who believes a few drops of water or sand sprinkled on the head is baptism, to leave his church, where he can have an abundance for such a ceremony, and go to Lake Michigan

to bury a believer [by sprinkling] with Christ in baptism.

The early fathers of the church write much about the symbolical meaning of baptism. I will give you extracts from two. Gregory writes in the year 350, "we are buried with Christ by baptism that we may also rise again with him; we descend with him, that we may be also lifted up with him." And Chrysostom says, "To be baptized and plunged, and then to emerge, or rise again, is a symbol of our descent into the grave, and our ascent out of it: and therefore Paul calls baptism a burial, when he says, 'we are therefore buried with him by baptism into death.'"

M. There certainly can be no doubt, if we can rely on what Paul himself says, and on which so many eminent scholars agree, that he was immersed; but are you not aware that a few of late days deny it? They say there was not enough water at Damascus to immerse Paul.

P. Yes, I am aware of it; and they are but few, with more presumption than sound knowledge. But they have never been able to prove it. In their overhaste to destroy Paul's immersion they have flatly contradicted the Scriptures. They say there was not enough water at Damascus to immerse Paul. The Bible says, "Are not the rivers of Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?" How easily a plain passage of Scripture can sweep away the inventions of error.

“The Barada, according to STANLEY and ROBINSON, rises on a high table-land of the Anti-Libanus, is a deep, broad, rushing mountain stream, with limpid water, and skirted with beautiful scenery. It is the source of fertility to Damascus, in the numerous canals which have been taken from it for purposes of irrigation.”—*Appleton's New American Cyclopædia*, p. 601, article *Barada*.

“The streams from the adjacent high range of Anti-Libanus, the Barada or Chrysorrhoas, and the Awadj, are supposed to be coincident with the Abana and Pharpar of Scripture. (2 Kings v. 12.) For many miles, the city [Damascus] is surrounded by fertile fields and gardens, which are watered by rivulets and sparkling streams, giving to the vegetation a charming freshness and sweetness.”—*Ibid.*, *Damascus*, p. 225.

Says the AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY'S BIBLE DICTIONARY, “Abana was undoubtedly the present Barada, * * * a perennial river, and so copious that, though no less than nine or ten branches, or canals, are drawn off from it, to irrigate the plain, and supply the city and villages around it, the stream is a large one to the end.”

And yet it was a dry country, say these wise, modern Pedobaptists—not enough water to baptize Paul. Why will men build so much on the sand, when there is solid rock furnished free by the Bible for an enduring foundation? Pity they will persist

in their foolish notions at the expense of truth and common sense.

M. That's so. But men with a poor cause to defend, have to resort to strange things.

P. Of the manner in which the Apostles baptized, Hermas, mentioned by Paul (Rom. xvi. 14), says; "The Apostles and teachers preached to them that before were dead, and gave this seal [baptism]; for they went down with them into the water and came up again." And Barnabas, the companion of Paul, in one of his epistles, says, "Blessed are they who, fixing their hope on the cross, have gone down into the water." In the other epistle he says, "We descend into the water," etc.

Now who are we to believe? Paul and his fellow-laborers in the Gospel, who tell us plainly that they were immersed, and that they immersed others? or those superficial writers and declaimers against immersion, who, though they may be honest and sincere, only prove to us the more that honesty and sincerity may be employed in the propagation of error, and can never make that right which is wrong?

M. Paul and the Bible of course. I was not aware that proof so full and complete could be found outside of the Bible testimony to sustain immersion. You have strengthened my faith by the collateral evidence you have given. I have heard it said, that Paul thought so little of the importance of baptism, that he thanked God he had only baptized a few.

It was by one of that class who are continually talking about a "good conscience," "non-essentials," etc., and who can prove sprinkling to be right from Solomon's Song. Will you explain that passage before we separate?

P. If he can prove sprinkling to be baptism from Solomon's Song, any argument that you or I can make, though clearly sustained from the New Testament, will not reach the disease under which he is laboring. He must be incurable. I will leave a Presbyterian commentator to answer the objection. "Contention had crept into the church," says he; "some cried up Paul and some Apollos; some Cephas, and some were for neither, but Christ only. Paul expostulates with them on their discords and quarrels. 'Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you?' Was he your sacrifice and atonement? Did I ever pretend to be your Saviour? Or 'were ye baptized into the name of Paul?' Were ye devoted to my service, or engaged to be my disciples by this rite? No: 'I thank God I baptized none of you,' etc. In this sense it was a matter of thankfulness he had baptized so few. It could not now be said that he had baptized *in his own name* — made disciples for himself — set himself up as the head of a sect."

M. That is a common sense view of it — sound and clear. But what do you make of Paul's statement that God sent him not to baptize, but to preach?

P. Just what our writers make of it. The simple meaning is—the primary object of my mission is to preach. “Not so much to baptize as to preach.” This is evident, for *he did baptize* some. He had assistants, and left it to them to baptize, while he set himself to the more important work of preaching. But we have paid more attention to the simple objection than it is worth.

Now let us sum up briefly the points established. Paul tells us himself that he was *immersed*—*buried with Christ in baptism*. HERMAS and BARNABAS tell us the Apostles immersed. Then we have the testimony of the Fathers, and nearly all the most eminent scholars and divines since the times of Christ until now, that Paul positively refers to immersion when he says to the Romans and Colossians, “we are buried with him by baptism,” etc.

Now let me ask you, in conclusion, can common sense believe that St. Paul, and all the Christians at Rome and Colosse, would have been immersed, as it is fully evident they were, if sprinkling would have answered the same purpose? No. And therefore as they *were immersed* and *not sprinkled*, the evidence is complete and conclusive, that *they did not believe sprinkling baptism*. *They knew nothing about sprinkling for baptism*. *They neither talked about it, nor practiced it*. Thus Paul speaks out clearly and distinctly for immersion, and tells us as there is but *one Lord* and *one faith*, so there is but *one baptism*.

M. And the Apostle could never write to our

churches in the language he addressed the Romans and Colossians. His are *unmeaning, dead words to every sprinkled Christian, and every Pedobaptist church*. I pity the man who takes upon himself to prove that a burial in water is a sprinkling on land.

P. That is very true, brother C. Suppose the Apostle were to address an epistle to one of our churches, commencing:

“Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death; therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death * * planted together in the likeness of his death * * wherein also ye are risen with him”—

Would not the reply be:

“No, *we know nothing about it*, Paul. ’Tis all a mystery to us. ‘Buried with him—planted together—risen with him!’ What *do* you mean, Paul? No, no; we have neither been buried nor planted with Christ in baptism—in the likeness of his death—nor raised up with him to walk in newness of life; unless you call our sprinkling a burial, and planting, and a rising from the grave! In that case, we’ve been *buried*, and *planted* by sprinkling into Jesus Christ—*planted* by *sprinkling* into the likeness of his death! and in our imagination we rose from the grave when we were *buried by sprinkling standing up in the church!*”

“Tut, tut! That’s all jargon and nonsense!” would not Paul indignantly reply. “You make horrible work of my language. How can you mis-

understand me, or pervert my words? Have I not told you that there is but 'ONE BAPTISM?' and that I was '*planted,*' '*buried,*' and '*raised*' with Christ in baptism? Have I not told you that I delivered but one form of doctrine and ordinances to the church, and taught the same things every where in every church? And yet you would make me speak such nonsense as that! Ye have taken for doctrine and practice the traditions of men; and thus have ye destroyed the symbol of the believer's death to sin, and resurrection to a new life, and the Master's burial and resurrection. If ye can not believe the plain words I have written to the Romans and Colossians, neither will ye be persuaded though one rose from the dead. I say unto you as I wrote unto them:

'Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.'

Here let us end our investigation for to-night. To-morrow evening we will devote to the Eunuch's baptism.

EMINENT PEDOBAPTISTS WHO AFFIRM THAT THE APOSTLE PAUL REFERS TO IMMERSION IN ROMANS VI. 4, AND COLOSSIANS II. 12.

The list might be greatly extended ; but it is large enough to show the truth of what our Presbyterian friend asserts.

TERTULLIAN, a Christian father, who flourished at the close of the second century.

ORIGEN, an illustrious father of the church (beginning of third century).

CYPRIAN, Bishop of Carthage (third century).

CHRYSOSTOM, Bishop and Patriarch of Constantinople (fourth century).

EST, Catholic Chancellor of the University of Douay.

PHOTIUS, Patriarch of Constantinople (eighth century).

ST. EPHREM, the Syrian, a learned writer of fourth century.

BEDE, surnamed the Venerable, an historian in the ancient church of Britain.

JOHN FRITH, a distinguished reformer and martyr.

WM. TYNDAL, translator of the Bible, and martyr.

JOHN CALVIN.⁴

MARTIN LUTHER.²

ZUINGLI, a distinguished annotator.

AUGUSTUS NEANDER, D.D., church historian.

HUGO GROTIUS, LL.D., one of the most profound scholars of the seventeenth century.

JOHN D. MICHAELIS, Chancellor of the University of Gottingen, a man of vast erudition.

JOHN C. WOLFIUS, a learned critic of Germany.

W. M. L. DE WETTE, D.D., one of the most eminent scholars of Germany.¹

F. A. G. THOLUCK, D.D., commentator, Professor of Theology in the University of Halle.¹

WM. BURKITT, D.D., a celebrated commentator.³

DANIEL WHITBY, D.D., a commentator of distinguished learning.³

JOHN G. ROSENMULLER, a learned critic.²

ARCHBISHOP TILLOTSON, a learned author.³

J. B. KOPPE, D.D., an eminent scholar.²

JAMES MACKNIGHT, D.D., distinguished as a minister and commentator.⁴

PHILIP DODDRIDGE, D.D., a learned commentator.

J. T. BLOOMFIELD, D.D., an eminent scholar and author.

JOHN WESLEY.⁵

JOSEPH BENSON, D.D., celebrated as a commentator.⁵

ADAM CLARKE, D.D., a learned author and commentator.⁵

H. OLSHAUSEN, D.D., Professor of Theology in the University of Ertangen, and a commentator.

PHILIP SCAHFF, D.D., Professor of Theology in the Mercersburg Seminary, and an able scholar.¹

CONYBEARE and HOWSON, distinguished as authors of the Life and Epistles of St. Paul.³

J. A. TURRETIN, a learned scholar, Professor of Theology at Geneva.⁴

ALBERT BARNES, D.D., author of Commentary on New Testament.⁴

GEORGE HILL, D.D., President of St. Mary's College, St. Andrews.⁴

ROBERT HALDANE, Esq., a distinguished writer.⁴

If we add to these all the learned writers who declare *immersion* to be the correct rendering of the word *baptize*, and those who say that *immersion* was the practice of the primitive church; we have an array of testimony in favor of the Baptists truly imposing.

In comparison with the foregoing testimony how pitiful is the assertion of the writer of the tract, "Bible Baptism," published by the Presbyterians. Immersion is a "sectarian baptism," says he: "this [pouring] gives you the form, and only *form* of Bible baptism."

1. German Reformed. 2. Lutheran. 3. Episcopalian, or Church of England.
4. Presbyterian. 5. Methodist.





SEVENTH CONVERSATION.

The Baptism of the Eunuch.

DRESBYTERIAN. Well, brother E., we have a plain case before us to-night. It is really a one-sided question, and the Baptists have it all their own way.

METHODIST. Yes, the Baptists are "great" on the Eunuch's baptism. And here I agree with them heartily. I have always believed that the Eunuch was immersed, from the narrative given in the Bible. Yet I shall be glad to listen to what you have to say about it. I will read the example:

"Then Philip opened his mouth and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the Eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thy heart thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still, and they WENT DOWN BOTH INTO

THE WATER; both Philip and the Eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were COME UP OUT OF THE WATER, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the Eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing"—Acts viii. 35—39.

P. The Eunuch, a man in authority, was traveling in state. Philip joined him, and preached unto him Christ, and no doubt baptism; for on arriving at certain water, the Eunuch said: "See, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?" when, on the profession of his faith, Philip baptized him. An eminent scholar and writer, once a Presbyterian minister, says: "This is as correct and as literal a translation of the words, as can possibly be made; and surely it is so plain that the most illiterate man can be at no loss to discover from it the mind of the Lord on the subject. The man who can read it, and not see immersion in it, must have something in his mind unfavorable to the investigation of truth. As long as I fear God, I can not, for all the kingdoms in the world, resist the evidence of this simple document. Nay, had I no more conscience than Satan himself, I could not, as a scholar, attempt to expel immersion from this account. All the ingenuity of all the critics of Europe [and America, too], could not silence the evidence of this passage. Amidst the most violent perversions it can sustain on the rack, it will still cry out *immersion! immersion!*"

M. I know it has been awfully tortured by some of our ministers, and the more they have tried to

extort from it an admission in favor of sprinkling, it has always cried to me the louder in favor of immersion.

P. And so it does to all impartial seekers after the truth. But let us look at the order of the narrative. It is stated first that Philip and the Eunuch came unto a "certain water," then "they went down both into the water." Why should they go down *to the water*, and *into the water*, if not for immersion? And then, as if the Holy Spirit intended to make the immersion so plain that no one need misunderstand it, it is added, "both Philip and the Eunuch." Why should Philip go into the water, if not to immerse the Eunuch? He could have stood by the side of the water and sprinkled him. And lastly, after their baptism, they both *came up out of the water*. How could they come out of the water if they had not been in it?

Thus, to repeat what I have said, coming *unto the water*, they *went down to the water*, *went into the water*, and *came up out of the water*. What can be a clearer case of immersion than this? Can there be words found in the English language to express more distinctly and emphatic the immersion of a believer? Is it not vain to deny it?

M. It certainly is. And when I have heard our ministers, who knew no more about Greek than myself, talk so boastingly that going down into and coming up out of the water only meant *to* and *from* the water, I could not help thinking of the Scotch

woman's reply to the Universalist: "Ye twist the Scriptures!" Nay more, they contradict the Scriptures. The Bible says one thing, they say another. I never could see why it is stated so positively that they both went down into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch, if they only went to the water's edge. If it meant so, why is it not thus stated? If that is the right meaning, why did not the translators use the very words to express it? Why let the narrative say in so many different ways it was an *immersion*, if it was a *sprinkling*? Is it credible that the Holy Spirit would use language so calculated to mislead, if sprinkling or pouring were here meant?

P. That is a just and common sense view of it. Besides, there were words in the Greek language to express distinctly the act of sprinkling and pouring. Why did not the sacred writers employ them? And if they did use them, why have our translators employed words that entirely destroy their meaning? The conclusion, to my mind, is inevitable—the narrative means what it says, or different words would have been used.

"The Bible was written for plain men, in a plain style, that they might at a glance get its meaning. When men read about baptism in the New Testament, of being baptized in Jordan, all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, going down into the water, coming up out of the water, buried in baptism, etc., they get the idea of immersion—just what all the lexicons say what the word means.

And if it were not for the continued efforts of our ministers to make the Bible oppose itself, all controversy on the subject of baptism would soon end.

M. I have thought the way some of our friends try to prove that the Bible does not teach immersion, in such a clear case as the Eunuch's baptism, has led many to doubt the inspiration of God's Word. Now, says the skeptic, how can you blame us for not believing the Bible? Here it clearly and distinctly states that Philip and the Eunuch went into the water and came up out of the water, and yet you tell us it does not mean any such thing. If in such a plain statement of facts it deceives us here, how can we believe it to be a revelation from God?

P. And his conclusion is just. No wonder the infidel went to the minister who had been trying hard to prove that going into and coming up out of the water did not mean so. He complimented him on his sermon—it had relieved his mind of a great difficulty. “For,” said he, “I could never believe that Daniel was cast into a lion's den and came out safe; nor that Shadrach, Meshac, and Abednego were cast into the fiery furnace, and came out unburnt. But your argument to-day makes it all easy. There was no miracle about it. Daniel was cast at or near the lion's den, and the three worthies went to or near the furnace, but not into it. No wonder they all escaped safely!”

But one of the *smartest* things of modern

inventions is to be found in a little tract printed and circulated widely by the Presbyterians. The writer says: "In Bible baptism the person is never put into water, but water is put upon the person. So when Philip baptized the Eunuch: wearing no stockings it was very easy to remove the sandals, and then, gathering up the flowing robes, to step *into the margin of the stream*. And then Philip took water into his hands, and caused it to fall upon the Eunuch, and thus baptized him."

M. The foolish writer! Why did he go to the trouble of removing the Eunuch's sandals, tucking up his flowing robes, and taking him into the margin of the stream to sprinkle or pour water on him? He could have done this, and made much easier work of it. But he seems to know all about it: he talks as if he had been there. But where does he find these things in the Bible? If he had had common sense enough to have told us how broad the margin was, how deep Philip had to take the Eunuch into the water to find sufficient to sprinkle him, and how he "*caused*" the water to fall on the Eunuch—if he had given us but one passage of Scripture as proof—he would have settled the question forever. Inventing so much, why didn't he settle the matter by adding a little more.

P. Here is what MATTHEW HENRY, the commentator, says: "It was the best baiting place the Eunuch ever met with in any of his journeys, so he ordered his coachman to stop, commanding his

chariot to stand still. They had no convenient vessels with them, being on a journey, wherewith to take up water, and must therefore go down into it, going barefoot, according to the custom. They went perhaps up to the ankles into the water, and Philip sprinkled water upon him."

M. But he has forgotten the sandals,

P. Yes, but he is sure it was a good *baiting place*.

Mr. WESLEY says: "That going down may relate to the chariot, and implies no determinate depth of water. It might be up to their knees, it might not be above their ankles!" I give you these examples to show how good some of our friends are at invention.

M. And yet they all have to take the Eunuch into the water to sprinkle him. If Mr. WESLEY had left the chariot out of the water in charge of MATTHEW HENRY'S coachman, and tucked the Eunuch's Presbyterian flowing robes up, it would have agreed better with the other writers.

P. Some of our ministers have to labor long and hard to try and prove that the narrative does not mean what it teaches. It takes a great deal of their time and learning to try and prove that the Bible is not true. But Dr. DODDRIDGE, a celebrated Congregational expositor, has the candor to say, "It would be very unnatural to suppose that they went down to the water merely that Philip might take up a little water to pour on the Eunuch." And JOHN CALVIN says: "Here we may perceive how baptism

was administered among the ancients, for they immersed the whole body in water."

M. And Dr. CLARKE admits it to have been an immersion. What do learned authors say about it?

P. So far as I have been able to ascertain, there is nearly a united voice from all learned authors that the Eunuch was immersed. Of late I have noticed there is great silence on the subject. The Bible and the Baptists are the victors. Our friends who have questioned it have given the text so many "queer meanings," that it has led many to doubt the truth of the cause that requires so much absurdity for its defence, and to commence investigating for themselves; and investigation, as with myself, will bring them into the light. Investigation will reveal the truth.

M. What you say about "queer meanings," reminds me of the anecdote of the negro. When asked why so many of them believed in immersion, he said, "We niggers have to work all de time, and when we read the Bible we have to take it just as it reads; for we have no time to hunt up queer meanings."

P. In looking over this narrative, I have asked myself the following question: If sprinkling was lawful, and practiced by the Apostles, why should Philip take the Eunuch down into the water? It was not necessary for that object—it was not certainly the easiest way of baptizing him, if sprinkling is baptism. And then the conclusion was inevitably

forced upon my mind, that Philip took the Eunuch down into the water to *immerse* him. Thus with that intention

“THEY WENT DOWN BOTH INTO THE WATER.”

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE GROUND EXAMINED.

P. I will now enumerate briefly the points proved in our *Conversations*.

1. I have proved conclusively that baptize means to immerse, and that only. I have proved it by common sense, by the testimony of lexicons, encyclopædias, eminent scholars of Pedobaptist denominations, and, above all, by the Scriptures. Among our writers who affirm it, are Luther, Calvin, Mosheim, Neander, Guericke, Chalmers, Knapp, Campbell, Macknight, Storrs, Flatt, Baxter, Stuart, and a host of others. With these agree the Greek Church, composing nearly half of Christendom, and over two million Baptists.

2. That the sacred writers used the word *baptize* as commonly understood by the people, and with a specific meaning — immersion.

3. That John's baptism was immersion.

4. That Christ and his disciples were immersed.

5. That the disciples, under the authority of Christ, immersed.

6. That the baptism of John and Christ were the same.

7. That Christ, in the great commission, commanded his disciples to go teach and immerse.

8. That Paul and the Romans and Colossians were immersed.

9. That the Eunuch was immersed by Philip.

10. That immersion was the practice of the primitive church.

M. With such an array of facts as you have given, I don't see where sprinkling can get a peg to hang a hope on.

P. It has one "peg," and that is "indifferency."

Now, can common sense believe that sprinkling is scriptural, when we declare that John, Jesus, the disciples of Jesus, Philip, Paul, the Christian Romans and Colossians, nay, the whole primitive church, baptized and were baptized by immersion? Would all these have been immersed had they believed sprinkling of divine origin, or could have answered the same purpose as immersion? If immersion had not been exclusively baptism, would the primitive church have quietly submitted to it without remonstrance or protest? We read of bitter opposition to sprinkling when it was introduced. We see it denounced as a human invention, and popes, councils, etc., called upon to sanction and defend it; but not so of immersion. Why all this,

if taught in the Scriptures, or believed an apostolical institution? Why so much preference for immersion and opposition to sprinkling, if sprinkling is a divine institution, and so much easier to submit to?

Bringing it nearer home, can common sense believe that the Greek Church, with its millions, and the two million Baptists in America, would refuse at this day, and at once, to accept of sprinkling, if they could believe it to be of God, and answer the same purpose as immersion?

And mark you, my friend, the primitive church practiced immersion when it was yet pure, before the dark days of degeneracy and corruption came upon it. But not so with sprinkling. It rose in the times of darkness and superstition, and abides in darkness even to this day. Human expediency gave it birth, and expediency alone now keeps it from a speedy death.

Here let us end our evening's conversation.

[Before parting Mr. E. said:

“The ordinance of baptism is to be administered to-morrow by a Pedobaptist and Baptist. One is to succeed the other. Suppose we go? We shall there see a practical illustration of the topics we have been discussing.”

To which Mr. C. assented, and so our two friends parted for the night with this understanding.]



THE BAPTISMAL SCENE.

ON the Sabbath Mr. E. called at the house of his friend, when they started together for the place of baptism. It was a beautiful day, and a large congregation had gathered to witness the scene. The Pedobaptist ceremony was to take place first. To get a clear view, our friends drew as near as they conveniently could. After singing and a brief prayer, seven or eight candidates for baptism stepped forward, and now was exhibited almost to perfection the opposing modes of Pedobaptism. Some stood up and others knelt down on the shore, and were sprinkled and poured. Some stood up in the water and were sprinkled, and one lady knelt down in the water and had a pailfull of water poured on her; while others were immersed. Five or six different ways was the ordinance administered — nearly as many modes as there were candidates.

After singing the doxology, the congregation was dismissed with the benediction.

Our two friends, with a far greater number of the

people, then went a little further up the river, where the Baptists were going to baptize. On their way, Mr. E., turning to his companion, said:

“Well, brother C., what do you think of that scene?”

M. I must say that it looked strangely inconsistent. How can all these things be baptism? How could the Saviour institute, and his Apostles practice, such contradictory modes as these? They are certainly at variance with both Scripture and common sense. All harmony and uniformity of practice, mentioned by the Apostle Paul, are completely destroyed. And yet we are told by our teachers that Christ did institute them. Of course they must believe it, or how would they dare to practice them? But it's very queer any how!”

P. If there had been one sprinkled with sand and a babe with water, there would have been a complete illustration of the teachings of our friends; then the example would have been perfect. What kind of “*consciences*” must the administrator and the baptized have? How can they reconcile these things with the Scriptures? It is beyond my comprehension; so I will turn it over to the doctors.

They now approached the large congregation that lined the banks of the beautiful river, and listened to the singing of that impressive hymn:

Thou hast said, exalted Jesus,
"Take thy cross and follow me;"
Shall the word with terror seize us?
Shall we from the burden flee?
Lord, I'll take it,
And, rejoicing, follow thee.

While this liquid tomb surveying,
Emblem of my Saviour's grave,
Shall I shun its brink, betraying
Feelings worthy of a slave?
No! I'll enter:
Jesus entered Jordan's wave.

Blest the sign which thus reminds me,
Saviour, of thy love for me;
But more blest the love that binds me
In its deathless bonds to thee:
O, what pleasure,
Buried with my Lord to be!

After singing and prayer the administrator quoted the following passages of Scripture: "Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized of John in Jordan."—Mark i. 10. "And they went down both into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch, and he baptized him."—Acts viii. 38.

Then the candidates, some fifteen in number, were passed by the deacons to the minister, the people singing:

Through floods and flames, if Jesus lead,
I'll follow where he goes,
"Hinder me not," shall be my cry,
Though earth and hell oppose.

After singing, they were baptized, the minister quoting Paul's words: "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism." Then, taking the hand of the last baptized, *straightway came up out of the water*, like Philip and the Eunuch. After which the doxology was sung, and the benediction pronounced. There was no haste nor confusion; and the whole ceremony not exceeding twenty minutes—less than half the time used on the former occasion. It was a deeply solemn time. Some were bathed in tears, while the faces of others were radiant with joy; while still others were convinced of sin, and retired from the baptismal waters to seek the Saviour, and in like manner were subsequently baptized.

On their way home, the two friends seemed little inclined to converse, so deeply were they impressed with the solemnity of the occasion. At length Mr. C. abruptly broke the silence, by exclaiming:

"That looks like baptism, brother E. How solemn and impressive! What order and uniformity! How joyful the baptized! Did you not see it all?"

"Yes; and I can truly say, it was good to be there. How appropriate the Scripture quoted! What a beautiful illustration of the scriptural examples of baptism we have been examining!"

Then each turned his steps homeward, with a friendly "good-by."



BAPTISM A SYMBOL.

THE example of the apostle Paul decides conclusively his opinion of baptism, and “sets clearly before us,” says the learned MICHAELIS, “*immersion*, and can not be applied to sprinkling with water.” And not only is his own action specified, but the immersion of the Romans and Colossians, nay, all who had then been baptized; for let it be kept in mind, that he *taught the same things “every where, in every church;”* and delivered unto the people *the same “doctrines” and “ordinances.”* How emphatically and joyfully he gives utterance to the blessed truth of his immersion in its symbolical significance, when writing to his brethren of the same like experience: “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.”—Rom. vi: 3, 4.

Says ROSENMULLER, a learned critic of the Lutheran church: “To baptize is *to immerse, to dip;*

the body, or the part of the body which is to be baptized, going under the water." "Immersion in the water of baptism, and the coming out of the same, was a sign that the old life had been abandoned, and a new one, in the opposite direction, established. Hence it was customary for those *baptized* to be spoken of on the one hand as *dead* and *buried*; on the other, as *resuscitated* again into a new life. The learned rightly admonish us, that on account of this mystical sense of baptism, the rite of immersion ought to have been retained in the Christian church."

"The rite of baptism," says ROBERT HALDANE, a Presbyterian, "exhibits Christians as dying, as buried, and as risen with Christ." Nay, it is a more comprehensive symbol than this. Well and beautifully does Dr. BOARDMAN say:

"Would thou symbolize thy death in sin and thy resurrection to holiness? Then be buried by BAPTISM into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so thou also mayst walk in newness of life.* Wouldst thou symbolize thy total detilement and thy desire for total purification? Then arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins.† Wouldst thou symbolize thy belief in a buried and risen Mediator, and thy participation in his death and resurrection? Then be buried *with* him in baptism, wherein also arise

* Rom. vi: 4.

† Acts xxii: 16.

with him.* Wouldst thou symbolize thy confident expectation that thou shalt share in his blissful immortality? Then submit thyself to baptism—descending into the liquid tomb and emerging: for if thou art planted together with him in the likeness of his death, thou shalt be also in the likeness of his resurrection.† Oh, glorious symbol this of the Christian's creed! He may tell me in words all that he believes about himself and about his Lord. He may tell me of his sins and his hopes—his tears for the past and his resolves for the future. He may tell me all that Jesus has done for him, and all that he intends to do for Jesus. But when I see him silently submitting himself to holy baptism, I read a more eloquent story, told in a language which all peoples of the earth can understand—which changes not with the flight of years—which no oratory can rival—which carries the head because it has first carried the heart—which is the truth of God expressed in the act of man. Not that there is any thing in the ordinance which savors of regenerating or sanctifying tendency. For baptism is a *symbol*, not a power; a shadow, not the substance. And it shadows forth at the same instant the most momentous events in the history of Christ and in the history of the Christian; all that Christ has suffered and done for us; all that we mean to suffer and do for Christ; all that we are by nature; all

* Col. ii. 12.

† Rom. vi. 5.

that we hope to be by grace. Verily, none but a God infinite in counsel could have devised a rite so simple and yet so dense with meaning and glory! To him be all the praise !”





EIGHTH CONVERSATION.

Infant Baptism.



METHODIST. Suppose we devote this evening, brother E., to the investigation of Infant Baptism? That is a doctrine in which I have ever believed, and which appears to me to be plainly taught in the Scriptures. Yet, from some things you have said, you have raised a doubt in my mind.

PRESBYTERIAN. I have no objection. I once thought the same as you do on this subject. But an examination of it has led me to a different conclusion.

M. It is a precious doctrine to me, and has a strong hold on my sympathy.

P. Well, let us examine it fairly and impartially. It was to me also a favorite and precious doctrine, and had firmly woven itself in my heart. But when I commenced my investigations, and found that at first, when infant baptism was invented, they dipped the babies, and afterward changed the mode to sprinkling, I was naturally led to distrust

the whole thing. This was the first invented mode for saving the children. The Episcopalians did it. Now if that was right then, why not dip the babes now? If they are, as some of our writers say, to be washed from original sin by baptism, certainly dipping looks more like washing than sprinkling.—or than moistening the head of the child with a finger dipped in a bowl of water.

Are you aware that infant baptism was introduced into the church on the same ground as sprinkling — *as a means of salvation?*

M. Certainly not; for, as I have said, it is found in the Scriptures.

P. But so it was. Men began to call the waters of baptism the sacred waters, and to look upon baptism as a saving ordinance. They taught that infants rested under the penalty of Adam's transgression, being guilty of original sin and liable to its consequences, being exposed to punishment. And thus, to save them from this, they must be baptized. The inventors of infant baptism wanted to save the children from endless perdition.

M. Why, that is what we call infant damnation.

P. Precisely so. And I repeat, to save them from being lost, the device of infant baptism was invented. And pardon me, if you think I am too severe, when I say, that it is the invention of priests, *the child of Popery*, and unfortunately has come by adoption into the Protestant family. Here is the decision of a church council [Carthage] of which

Augustine was president, affirmed and sanctioned by the Pope, 417: “ *We will that whosoever denies that little children by baptism are freed from perdition and eternally saved, let him be accurst.*”

“The law of baptism, as established by our Lord, extends to all, insomuch that unless they are regenerated through the grace of baptism, be their parents Christians or infidels, they are born to eternal misery and everlasting destruction.”—*Catechism of the Council of Trent, translated by Donovan*, p. 171.

Even John Wesley says, after endeavoring to prove that infants are in a state of condemnation, inheriting sin from Adam: “The free gift came upon all men unto justification of life; and the virtue of that free gift—the merits of Christ’s life and death—are applied to us in baptism.” Again he says: “If infants are guilty of original sin, then they are proper subjects of baptism; *seeing, in the ordinary way, they can not be saved unless this be washed away in baptism.*”—*Doctrinal Tracts*, pp. 246, 251.

M. But a majority of our church do not esteem Mr. Wesley sound on baptism. From what you have quoted, I know I do not.

P. Then why do you still publish his writings? This is one of your standard works, and prescribed for the study of young preachers. But let us see what your Discipline says: turn to pages 131 and 132, “The ministration of baptism to infants.” There the administrator tells the people to call upon

God, "that having redeemed this child by the blood of his Son, he will grant that he, being baptized with water, may also be baptized with the Holy Ghost, be received into Christ's holy church, and become a lively member of the same."

"We beseech thee that of thine infinite mercy thou wilt look upon this child: wash him and sanctify him; that he, being saved by thy grace, may be received into Christ's holy church."

"Sanctify this water for this holy sacrament, and grant that this child * * may receive the fullness of thy grace, and ever remain in the number of thy faithful and *elect children*."—133.

Then you say, page 23, "Baptism is also a sign of regeneration or the new birth," and that you "regard all children who have been baptized as placed in a visible covenant relation to God."—39.

What do you think of it?

M. I don't believe any such doctrine, though our Discipline does teach it. Now as you have been so plain with the Methodists, pray tell me what your church teaches about infant baptism? You know, as Methodists, we are very free in charging you as believing in infant damnation.

P. I know you are. Here is what we say:

"Baptism is the entrance into Christ's family."—*Thomas Hooker*.

"The efficacy of baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered, yet notwithstanding, by the right use of this ordinance, the

grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited and conferred by the Holy Ghost to such (whether of age or infants) as that grace belongeth unto, according to the counsel of God's own will in his appointed time."—*Cambridge Platform*, p. 25.

[The same as *Presbyterian Conf. of Faith*, p. 123.]

M. Well, that is surely strong enough. Grace "not only offered, but really exhibited and conferred by the Holy Ghost."

P. "To such as that grace belongeth unto."

M. "Whether of age or infants."

P. The words "such as that grace belongeth unto," are illustrated by the following: "Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ, through the Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how he pleaseth."—Chap. x. 3.

Again: the Confession of Faith says:

"The visible church consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, *together with their children*, and in the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, *out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation*." Again it says: "Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible church, but also to be unto him a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of his ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God, through Jesus Christ, to

walk in newness of life.”—*Confession of Faith*, p. 44, and *Cambridge* [Congregational] *Platform*, chap. 29. Here, you see, we say baptism was ordained by Christ, which, of course, includes infant baptism. And yet we call sprinkling, pouring, and immersion all baptism, and thus we make Christ the institutor of all. Again, we baptize children into the church, “out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.” Does not this look like what I have affirmed?

M. It certainly does. I was not aware that your church held such views.

P. Now, if there is no “ordinary possibility of salvation” out of the visible church, there must be some *extraordinary* possibility of salvation, or else the unbaptized children must be lost. If the baptized children are of the house and family of God, by baptism, the unbaptized children are certainly not of the house and family of God. What is to become of them? What is the *extraordinary* possibility of salvation whereby they may be saved?

M. I am sure I can not tell. I never heard of but one way of salvation—what Paul calls a “common salvation.”

P. Thus, as Presbyterians, we make baptism a saving ordinance.

M. It certainly seems so. But I have never thus viewed it. We can baptize infants without believing in baptismal regeneration.

P. That may be. But yet, I repeat, that baptismal regeneration was the design of those who invented infant baptism; and that the same object is still maintained by a far greater proportion of its advocates. Some say it washes away *original sin*, and cleanses from defilement; and thus original sin attaches to all unbaptized children. How are they to be saved *without baptism*? Others say infant baptism is *purification*: hence it must cleanse from moral impurity. How are they to be made clean for heaven if they are *not purified*? And still others, that the children of *believing parents* only are to be baptized; then what is to become of the children of the *unbelieving*? Thus, turn which way you will, you make infant baptism save the child. Even those who do not pretend to believe in infant baptism in a saving sense, can give no reasonable argument for the practice. Besides, their action condemns their declaration. Why should they baptize dying children? Why, when a child is taken dangerously ill, send with all haste for a minister to baptize it? “You charge us with believing in baptism being a saving ordinance,” said a Baptist, who had formerly been a Lutheran minister, to a Lutheran; “and yet, when one of your unbaptized children is taken sick, you’ll run your horse down in going after a minister to baptize it!” Does not that look a little like it? Was not the child as sure of heaven without as with the ceremony?

The following conversation lately occurred between a Baptist lady and a Lutheran, and was related to me by the lady herself. It shows how some people are led to believe in infant sprinkling by the false teachings of others :

“When are you going to have your baby baptized?” inquired the Lutheran of the Baptist.

“Not till it is old enough to answer for itself,” was the reply.

“Were the children you lost baptized?” continued the Lutheran.

“No.”

“Why!” responded the Lutheran, with apparent horror; “I wouldn’t stand in your place for any thing!”

“Why so?” said the Baptist.

“Because you will have to go to hell for not having them baptized.”

“Does your father believe that?” inquired the Baptist.

“Yes, he does.”

“Well, I’m astonished that such a sensible man as he appears should believe such nonsense.”

One day a Methodist woman called at the house of a Baptist minister in the State of New York, who lived next door to a Presbyterian minister, mistaking the house. Tears were streaming down her cheeks, and she was in great distress. She wished him to go and baptize her little child, which she thought was dying. He pitied her most deeply and

sincerely, and inquired why she wished the child baptized.

"I am afraid it will not be saved without it;" she replied.

He told her to dismiss her fears on that point, for the child would be saved just as well without as with baptism. "But," said he, "I will gladly do any thing I can consistently for your child. If you can think of any thing in the Bible which will authorize me to baptize it, I will go right off and do it."

She looked surprised, and replied that she thought the Bible plainly taught infant baptism.

"Well," said he, "if you can think of one passage, I will ask no more."

She paused to think. She thought of Christ's blessing little children. "But," said she, "that does not say he baptized them, does it?"

"No," he replied, "Jesus blessed them. If you desire it, I will go and pray for your child, and ask God's blessing upon it."

She wished he would; so he went to the house and prayed for the child, which recovered in a few days. This poor woman had suffered great distress from the false doctrine that her infant could not be saved unless baptized.

M. I am aware that circumstances are against us — that many baptize dying children. I knew of one case where the child was baptized after it had apparently ceased to breathe. And one of our

ministers had his child baptized when nearly at the point of death. But such instances are not very common.

P. Thus you virtually confirm what I have stated. And, instead of such occurrences being very rare, there are tens of thousands of cases of baptizing dying children. Why, I heard the other day of a Congregational minister who called in a Methodist minister to baptize his dying child.

M. But yet, infant baptism has always been a delightful doctrine to me. There is something satisfactory and soothing to the mind in dedicating our children to God in baptism.

P. And did not this satisfactory and soothing feeling arise from the belief, that the salvation of your child was surer after it was baptized than it was before?

M. To be candid, I do not know but what such a thought may have produced the satisfaction and pleasure I felt.

P. Just so. It is the way with all, when you get at the *cause* of their action. And yet you tell us you do not believe in infant baptism being a saving ordinance. There was a man very fervent in charging the Baptists with making baptism necessary to salvation, and who talked loudly of non-essentials, who called upon a friend of his, who had lost a lovely but unsprinkled child. "Wouldn't you have felt better," said he, "if your child had been baptized before it died?" "Better!" replied his friend;

“no, thank God, Christ takes care of the children: he saves them, and not baptism. But how would *you have felt if your child had died before it was sprinkled?* If, as you say, baptism comes in the place of circumcision, how would you have felt if death had enforced his claim when your child was but three days’ old?”

M. Certainly he must have *felt*, if he did not *look*, very foolish after such a forcible rejoinder as that.

P. Similar to the foregoing, is a circumstance related to me by a gentleman. Directly across the street from his residence, in a town on the Hudson, lived a family who regularly attended the Presbyterian, though they were not members of any, church. They had two sweet little daughters, of three and five years of age. Both were taken sick, and died within a few hours of each other. The neighbors came in to render their kind offices and console the afflicted parents. The Presbyterian minister’s wife was there. Some one said to the weeping mother, “Your children are better off now than they could be in this world.” The minister’s wife added: “Well, if they had been baptized I should have no doubt of their welfare; but as it is, I don’t know.”

M. That was very consoling to a bereaved mother.

P. Take care you do not condemn yourself. If I understand you, you say you dedicate your children to God in baptism. What more virtue is there in dedicating them in baptism, than in consecrating them to him on the altar of prayer?

M. I can not say that there is any more *virtue* in one than in the other. But baptism has this advantage — it puts the *seal* upon the child.

P. There it is again. The same idea of baptism being a saving ordinance in a new dress. So your child had not a valid and perfect document to entitle it to a participation in the blessings of the Gospel, without the seal of baptism. You had to perfect the instrument which, in the event of its death, gave it a clear title to heaven! But you are not alone in your opinion. MATTHEW HENRY, the Presbyterian commentator, says: “This, then, is the efficacy of baptism: it is *putting the child’s name into the Gospel grant*. We are baptized into Christ’s death; that is, God doth in that ordinance *seal, confirm, and make over to us all the benefits of the death of Christ*.” Now, let me ask you, what is to become of those children whose parents *do not* put their names in the “Gospel grant?” And if *all* the benefits of Christ’s death are made over to us by God in baptism, what is to become of the *unbaptized children*? How are they to receive any of the benefits of Christ’s death, when they are all made over to the baptized? Thus again you make infant baptism necessary to salvation.

M. [Blushing with confusion.] Well, brother E., it does seem a little like what you say. You present the case in a new light to me. But do you say there is no warrant for infant baptism in the Bible?

P. I can not find one, and I have searched care-

fully for it. Children are never mentioned in Bible instances of baptism. It is said [see Matt. xiv. 21] "they were baptized, both men and women." [Acts viii. 12.] But in no case of baptism are children named. You can neither find a command nor an example that authorizes you to baptize children. "He that will find it in the New Testament must first put it in there." The point is conceded. Here is what a few learned authors say:

LUTHER.—"It can not be proved by the sacred Scriptures that infant baptism was instituted by Christ, or begun by the first Christians after the Apostles."

CALVIN.—"It is no where expressly mentioned by the evangelists that any child was by the Apostles baptized."

NEANDER.—"It is certain that Christ did not ordain infant baptism." Again he says: "We can not prove that the Apostles ordained infant baptism in those places where the baptism of a whole family is mentioned, as in Acts xvi. 33; 1 Cor. i. 16. For my part, I feel inadequate to the task." And again: "We have all reason for not deriving infant baptism from Apostolic institution."

CHEVALIER BUNSEN.—It "was utterly unknown to the early church, not only down to the end of the second, but, indeed, to the middle of the third centuries."

DR. MERLE D'AUBIGNE — *the historian of the Reformation.* "However decided I may be for the baptism

of infants, I must nevertheless acknowledge that the express order, 'Baptize infants,' is found in no part of the Gospel."—*On the authority of God*, p. 152.

NORTH BRITISH REVIEW—*Presbyterian*. "The baptismal service is founded on Scripture: but its application to an unconscious infant is destitute of any express scriptural warrant. There is absolutely not a single trace of it to be found in the New Testament * * * there is not one word which asserts its existence."—*July*, 1852, pp. 209—12.

BISHOP BURNET.—"There is no express precept or rule given in the New Testament for the baptism of infants."—*Exposition of Articles*, Art. xxvii.

DR. WOODS—*Presbyterian*. "It is a plain case, that there is no express precept respecting infant baptism in our sacred writings. The proof, then, that infant baptism is a divine institution, must be made out in another way."—*Lectures on Infant Baptism*, p. 11.

PROFESSOR STUART—*Congregational*. "Commands, or plain and certain examples, in the New Testament, relative to it [infant baptism] I do not find."—*Bib. Rep.* 1833, p. 385.

NEW AMERICAN ENCYCLOPÆDIA.—"Though baptism, as the symbol of an inward change, was conferred at first only upon converts to the Christian faith, according to the prevailing modern opinion of biblical writers, yet at an early period the practice was introduced of baptizing infants, the church requiring security through certain sponsors that the

children should be brought up to lead a godly and Christian life.”—*Infant Baptism*, p. 595.

GUERICKE.—“That this rite [infant baptism] was actually practiced by the Apostles themselves, is not, indeed, capable of a strict and absolute demonstration from New Testament data.”—*Manual of Church History*, p. 140.

COLEMAN.—“Though no instance of baptism by sprinkling is mentioned in the New Testament, yet there are several cases in which it is hardly possible that it would have been administered by immersion.”—*Ancient Christianity Exemplified*, 377.

REV. HENRY WARD BEECHER.—“I concede and assert first, that infant baptism is no where commanded in the New Testament. It is not brought down as a substitute for circumcision.”

“It is true,” says the writer of a tract on “Christian Baptism,” published by the Presbyterians, “that we have no direct Scripture declaration, saying in so many words, that children should be baptized.”

Thus, from the testimony of Lutherans, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and Congregationalists, the idea of Infant Baptism being ordained by Christ and his Apostles, or commanded in the Bible, is expressly denied. Mr. BEECHER contends for it on the ground of expediency alone. He abandons and runs away from the field in which Pedobaptists have been contending so long and earnestly.

M. All that may be so with Mr. BEECHER, but I know Congregational churches, nevertheless, who

contend that infant baptism is an Apostolical ordinance.

P. Yes, and the one I have referred to says that they “receive and apply the ordinance of baptism and the Lord’s Supper as INSTITUTED BY CHRIST, *and practiced by the Apostles;*” and they immerse, pour, and sprinkle. Thus emphatically proclaiming to the world that Christ instituted all these methods, and infant baptism, and that the Apostles practiced them.

M. Surely, brother E., you are jesting. How can a church take such a contradictory position? How can they solemnly subscribe to such nonsense as that?

P. No, I am not jesting. It is the truth, however absurd their article of religion may be. But where they find it, is beyond my comprehension. Let them furnish the proof. Here is a fine chance for showing Mr. BEECHER he is wrong, and triumphantly “settling” all the opposers of infant baptism. After this, I hope they will not be satisfied with a simple declaration, but clinch it with Scripture — if they can!

But as it is now late, and as I understand you have something to say in favor of infant baptism, let us adjourn till to-morrow evening.



NINTH CONVERSATION.

Infant Baptism—Concluded.



IN continuing the subject of infant baptism Mr. E. said:

“Well, brother C., what do you think of the concessions of our friends on infant

baptism?”

METHODIST. I admit they are very striking; but sometimes great men say and do ridiculous things; and though you may charge me with presumption, let me try if I can not find some clear cases of infant baptism in the Scriptures.

PRESBYTERIAN. That is right. And instead of charging you with presumption, I commend you for your independence. Truth is for all. And your opinion, simply as an opinion, is entitled to as much consideration and respect as that of the wisest of men, not based upon the Bible. I shall be glad to look at your examples. Which is your first clear case of infant baptism?

M. Turn to Matthew xix. 13, 14: "Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." "And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them."—Mark x. 16.

Now, when a minister takes little children in his arms and baptizes them, it looks like following the example of the Saviour. I never could see why any one should be opposed to bringing the children to Christ.

P. Why really, brother C., it is my turn to be astonished now. The verses you have quoted say expressly that Christ took the children into his arms *to bless*, and *not to baptize* them. Yet why should I be astonished at you more than others? I know there are a great many Christians who believe that Christ's blessing little children is authority for infant baptism. I once believed it. Even many ministers, when baptizing the precious children, quote the Saviour's words with such frequency and fervency, as to justify us in concluding that they consider his example as authority for baptizing them.

M. Of course they do.

P. But Christ's blessing the children was not baptism. He taught a lesson altogether different to what Pedobaptists teach. He says, "Of such is the

kingdom of heaven," whether baptized or not; and we say, many of us at least, "of such is the kingdom of heaven," *if they are baptized.*

THE BIBLE AND THE BAPTISTS

SAY:

"Jesus took little children in his arms and BLESSED THEM."

PEDOBAPTISTS SAY:

Jesus took little children in his arms and SPRINKLED THEM!

Those who are opposed to infant baptism are more liberal than we. They say all the children go to heaven at death; but we only open the door to the *baptized*. They give them *all to Christ*; but we only give him *the baptized children*. Who loves the children the most? Some of our ministers have said that "there are only two places where there are no children—a Baptist church and hell!" What do you think of that? Talk about the Baptists being severe on us! why some of our friends can out-Herod Herod in their scurrilous abuse of the Baptists. Now if I had been a Baptist, I could have retorted that they had forgotten a part of their creed; that since *they had shut out the unbaptized children from heaven*, I should like to know what they had done with them! I could also have told them that there is still another place where there are no children—a Pedobaptist communion table: that after they have baptized them into the church, calling them young Christians, well-pleasing to God, they fence them from the Lord's table!

M. Well, I must admit that baptism is not mentioned in the example of Christ, and I do not see

but what I shall have to abandon it as proof of infant baptism.

P. What is your next clear case?

M. The jailor's family. [Reads the narrative, Acts xvi. 25-34.] Thus, you see, the jailor "was baptized, he and all his, straightway." There must certainly have been children there.

P. Where do you find them? It is for you to prove it. The burden of proof rests on you. But let us look at the particulars: 1. The "Word of the Lord" was preached unto the jailor, "and to all that were in his house." 2. Then they were baptized. 3. Then it is said, "he rejoiced, *believing in God, with all his house.*" Did the jailor "believe in God" *for* "all his house," or did "all that were in his house" believe in God?

M. The latter, of course. That is plain.

P. You concede all I ask. Now, if you contend that the words "all his house," and "all that were in his house," imply children, then, as you say, they were large enough to "believe in God;" and, of course, proper subjects for baptism. And I suppose our Baptist friends would be quite willing to baptize such believing children, to whom the Word of God had been preached. But then, again, I say it is for you to prove it. But where are the babes? How could they "believe in God?" Did Paul and Silas preach to them? Did they believe? When my attention was particularly drawn to this fact, I was sorely puzzled; but I would not yield.

Our friends had thrust the babes so forcibly into the jailor's family, that I believed it all true. True, I could not find them in the narrative, but that made no difference; there they must be, and there I would have them. But the words, "believing in God with all his house," kept so ringing in my ears, that I was compelled at last to admit there were no babes there. A short time ago I heard a Baptist minister declare that he baptized a jailor and all his house, comprising six persons. I have heard of one church where there are four baptized households, and not a baby in any of them. It is quite common to find baptized households; and I see no reason for making the scriptural examples any more a cause of wonder than the examples of our day.

M. Well, brother E., you certainly put the case in a strange and novel manner. I never saw it thus before. They must have been curious "babes" to do all this. But what do you say of Lydia's household. "She was baptized, and her household."—Acts xvi. 15.

P. What I have said of the jailor's family in part applies to Lydia. Lydia was from Thyatira, a city of Lydia, a province in Asia Minor. She is probably called Lydia from being a citizen of the province of that name. I do not say positively, for there is no proof of the fact. She was at Philippi, which was "the chief city of that part of Macedonia," a country in the northeast of Europe. Her business there was to sell purple, no doubt doing business

at Philippi transiently as a merchant, as was the custom at the east. The art of dyeing purple was particularly cultivated at Thyatira, and was in great demand in other countries. Now, if you will get your map, you will see that Lydia was a great way from home, having to cross the *Ægean* sea to get from Thyatira to Philippi.

M. You are correct in your geographical account, but what has that to do with her baptism? Are you not condemning yourself by indulging in suppositions? How do you know she was a merchant and a transient visitor at Philippi?

P. From what the Bible says: "She was of the city of Thyatira," and a "seller of purple." Now, is it likely to suppose that she would be so far from home on business, with helpless babes, as you assume?

M. Well, it does seem rather improbable.

P. Certainly it is improbable. But let us look at her baptism. The baptism took place at the river. "And on the Sabbath we went out of the city, by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made, and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither."—Acts xvi. 13. A very convenient place for immersion, was it not? "And a certain woman, named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshiped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended to the things which were spoken of Paul."—14. "And when she was baptized, and her

household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there.”—15. So you see that Lydia and her household were baptized in the river, and that the Apostles were not in her house until after the baptism. In the fortieth verse, Lydia’s household are counted among “the brethren.” The jailor’s and Lydia’s household were the only disciples in the city.

M. I have always supposed that Lydia was baptized in her house. Our preachers never tell us about the prayer-meeting, and the baptism at the river. I have heard much about Lydia’s household being an example of infant baptism, but somehow they forgot to mention that they were baptized in the river.

P. Again: you will see that it was to the WOMEN that “resorted” to the river, “where prayer was wont to be made,” that the Apostles preached. There were no babes there. Now, your next case.

M. The household of Stephanus. “And I baptized also the household of Stephanus.”—1 Cor. i. 16.

P. I need not dwell on that. “Ye know the house of Stephanus,” says Paul (1 Cor. xvi. 15.), “that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints.” There were no babes there.

M. Well, let that pass. Now for the household of Cornelius. [See Acts x.]

P. Of Cornelius it is said he was “a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house.”—2.

The angel told him to send for Peter, "*who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.*"—xi. 14. When Peter came and "began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them."—15. Do babes receive the Holy Ghost? Cornelius and his household received the Holy Ghost. Could babes receive the words whereby all the house were to be saved?

M. But what do you make of the baptism of Crispus? "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized."—Acts xviii. 8.

P. I make of this case, what I made of the jailor's. "*Crispus believed on the Lord with all his house.*" Now, it is for you, if you will have babes there, to show me how they could "believe in the Lord." Have you any more "clear examples" of infant baptism?

M. No, I think not. And I must confess that I have made out a very poor case.

P. You have the sympathy of all who have tried it. It never can be proved that there were baptized babes in these families. It is all based on the suppositions of fanciful imaginations.

M. I do not see why our ministers should persist in quoting these examples in proof of infant baptism, when we can not find the babes there.

P. Find them! no; hunt for them as we may. And yet they will have them there, in spite of what

the Bible teaches. We take the responsibility, and thrust imaginary babes into babeless families.

M. I have always looked upon infant baptism as coming in the room of circumcision. Circumcision was the seal of the covenant with Abraham. And as the children were circumcised then, so the children are to be baptized now. Baptism is a seal of the covenant.

P. That infant baptism does not come in the place of circumcision is clearly evident from the following facts:

1. Abraham when he was circumcised was ninety-nine years old (Gen. xvii. 24.), and twenty-four years before he believed in God, when it was accounted to him for righteousness.

2. God *commanded* the Jews to be circumcised. He has not commanded infants to be baptized.

3. The male children of the Jews were circumcised, and not the females.

4. They were circumcised when eight days old.

5. All the male servants, both young and old, were required to be circumcised.

6. The children were to be circumcised by the parents, and not by the priests.

7. Circumcision was a literal, outward act, and was to distinguish the Jews as a people or nation. It conferred no spiritual grace, nor made the Israelites the spiritual children of God. If circumcision introduced the circumcised into a spiritual relation, then was the entire Jewish *nation* a spiritual people,

which we know was not the fact. The Ishmaelites practiced circumcision. They did not enjoy a spiritual relation to God. If circumcision introduced the Jews into a spiritual relation to God, and as you say baptism takes the place of circumcision, then baptism introduces the baptized into a spiritual relation too, and, consequently, makes them the children of God. Thus, again, you make baptism a saving ordinance!

M. But was not circumcision a seal of the covenant, whereby the children were sealed over to God? Does it not bring them into a covenant relation to him?

P. The covenant, of which circumcision was the seal, was a literal covenant, wherein God promised to give to Abraham and his seed the land of Canaan. It was the mark of identity of Abraham's seed, as well as the sign of God's promise to give him and his seed the goodly land. How can baptism bring a child into covenant relation to God? A covenant can not be entered into by a child; neither has any one the right at baptism to covenant for the child. A parent or sponsor may agree to do something of themselves for the child; but the child has no voice in it. Baptism is a different thing. It is a voluntary act of obedience on the part of the individual baptized. It is an act of intelligence — something to be understood — all of which the child is ignorant of. Again: how can baptism come in the place of

circumcision, when circumcision has never been abolished?

M. Well, brother E., you overturn all my theories.

P. Your theories are but the opinions of others; and because theories, are so easily overturned by facts. Now let me ask you, into what kind of a relation does infant baptism bring the children? What does it do for them? As infant baptism conveys no spiritual benefit to the child, of what advantage is it? What advantage have the baptized above the unbaptized children?

M. I am at a loss to reply to your question.

P. I am not surprised at your answer. I have never found a Pedobaptist who could answer it without affirming infant baptism to be essential to salvation. There is a vast amount of contradiction among the advocates of infant baptism themselves. Some say it is necessary for salvation. "WALL, HAMMOND, and others, predicate it on *Jewish proselyte baptism*. OWEN, JENNINGS, and many others, *reject* Jewish proselyte baptism, and predicate it on circumcision. Bishop JEREMY TAYLOR, and many others, reject circumcision. BEZA, DODDRIDGE, and others, teach that children are holy, and are therefore to be baptized. WESLEY and his disciples teach that they are unholy, and must be baptized to cleanse them from their defilement. BURDER, DWIGHT, and others, baptize no infants but those of Christian parents, all of whom they say are born in the church, and are

therefore entitled to its ordinances; on the other hand, BAXTER, HENRY, and others, baptized infants to bring them into the church." Here you see a perfect babel of opinions on the subject. How can we believe that an institution that causes so many contradictory and absurd notions is of God?

A Baptist minister traveling in Iowa, stopped at a Methodist camp meeting, and on Saturday was requested to preach. He did so, his subject being "the duty of Christian parents to their children, in view of future results." In one of his illustrations he showed the great care some farmers took in preserving their seed corn, above that which they manifested in the spiritual welfare of their children. On Sabbath morning the Methodist preached, the Baptist being in the stand. At the close of his sermon, the Methodist called on parents to bring their children for baptism, at the same time saying, "As our Baptist brother spoke of children being the seed-corn of the church, we will now attend to preserving it." To which the Baptist promptly replied: "It is not customary to put seed-corn to soak ten or twenty years before using it." The effect was instantaneous and ludicrous on the congregation; and the Methodist laughingly replied: "Brother, you have got me this time!" The result was, not as many infants were sprinkled as had been expected.

M. But you can not say that infant baptism does no good. Does it not exert over the baptized a restraining influence? Does it not throw around

them a charm? and are they not eventually more likely to be converted?

P. Certainly I say it does no good. It is a positive evil. It has destroyed the spirituality and power of churches, by filling them with an unconverted membership, producing formality, and culminating in the denial of the truth of the Christian religion. The infidelity of France and Germany has its root in infant baptism. It is the great feeder of all State religions, and essentially necessary to the union of Church and State. It purports to be of God, when it is the invention of men. It assumes power to save the children. It is a charm that lulls the soul to sleep, causing men to believe that their salvation is secure because they have been baptized in infancy, and united with the church. It tries to supplant, and would, if universal, believer's baptism. "It conflicts with a fundamental principle of Christianity — *soul liberty*, or the undisturbed and undisputed right of every person to serve and worship his Creator in the form and manner he may choose: but if baptized in infancy, his baptism and his church relation are chosen for him; and he is taught that to reject his baptism is very sinful." "It does by proxy what would give very great joy to believers, if they were left to act for themselves." It assumes to be sustained by the Scriptures, when there is neither a command nor an example for it. It places a yoke upon our children which weighs them down in all time to come.

Well has it been said, that “the right of choice in baptism and church membership is wrested away forever from children. Will you claim for the man a ‘perfect freedom in attaching himself to such denomination as he shall choose,’ but virtually annul the privilege, by joining him to a church when a child? Will you claim for the man a choice in baptism, but forestal him in the choice while he is yet a babe? Shutting him up to the opinions of others unless he will join in an ‘affront to the Christian world,’ by submitting to be ‘re-baptized.’ Shall childhood, in its innocence and helplessness, be despoiled of its freedom? Will you wring from the tender hand of infancy what you dare not *ask* of manhood? Oh! at every point this practice infringes Christian principle. As the truth advances it must *die*.”

What right have sponsors — godfathers and godmothers — to step in the place of the child, and assume what they do in baptism, and that, too, when they are unconverted?

M. There is great weight in what you say. I have been at a loss myself to understand why unconverted men and women should stand sponsors for children at baptism; and why the children of ungodly parents should be baptized. But by some it is viewed only as a form.

P. Yes, I know it is so looked upon by some; but that does not make it the less wrong. It is a piece of the same cloth from the loom of human

inventions. On a certain occasion a wedding occurred in an Episcopal family, the minister being called from a neighboring town. There being an unbaptized infant in the family, the parents thought it a favorable time to have the baby baptized; and after the wedding presented it for baptism. But the trouble was to find a "godfather" who would stand sponsor for the child. There being no other present who was willing to take this position, a clever, but wild harum-scarum chap, the ringleader of all the fun and frolic of the town, offered his services, which were promptly accepted. The ceremony proceeded until the minister required the godfather, in behalf of the child, to renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil, and to live a prayerful, holy, and godly life; when he, thinking this was too much for him to promise in so solemn a manner, cried out:

"Hold on! hold on! I don't know about that."

But the minister soothingly replied: "Oh, it's only a *form* — only a form."

"Well," said the godfather, "if it's only a form, you may go ahead!"

Thus showing, with all his frolic and fun, he had more conscience, in reference to sacred things, than this pretended successor of the Apostles.

It is just as right for wicked people to stand sponsors, and for the children of ungodly parents to be baptized, as it is for a minister to sprinkle them. The whole thing is a fabrication, and has, to a fearful extent, been the curse of the world. Look at

the tens of thousands who are now counted church members by infant baptism, who have never been regenerated, and you will see enough to make you shudder. Look at the Roman Catholic, Episcopalian, and Lutheran churches in Europe, and see what an alarming state of things it has produced. Infidelity, Sabbath-breaking, drunkenness, profanity, etc., are unblushingly advocated and practiced by those who are church members by infant baptism. It is all a natural result. Like begets like. A spiritual church is not to be expected from an unconverted church membership.

M. That is certainly a very dark and gloomy picture.

P. But not as deeply colored as the original. First, usurping the place of God's ordinance, Infant Baptism has marched on in strife, persecuting, fining, imprisoning, and martyring those who would not bow down to it, and submit to its ungodly assumptions. Many a poor victim has been offered to appease the persecuting spirit it created, and the unjust and cruel laws it enacted.

"Late as 1611, the very year in which James published the common English Bible, he carefully burnt the body of that sturdy old Baptist, Edward Wightman, in the streets of Lichfield, that Englishmen might have a good light to read its Baptist truths by. Wightman's crime consisted in saying, 'that the baptizing of infants is an abominable custom: that the Lord's Supper and Baptism are

not to be celebrated as they are now practiced in the Church of England.' ”

Look, again, at the consequences of baptizing infants into the church :

“ Infants, on being baptized, become members of the church. They are necessarily at that time destitute of faith in Christ. How large a proportion of them grow up, live, and die, without that faith. Yet all the time they are members of the church, and entitled to take part in the management of its affairs. What kind of society has it become? What kind of society *must* it become, under such a process? It must mainly consist of the unregenerate—of persons who have no sympathy whatever with spiritual truth and spiritual worship—and who will therefore be prepared to patronize any arrangements which will gratify the gay, the sensual, ambitious tendencies of human nature. As there is nothing apostolic in the elements of such a church, we may expect a wide departure from apostolic rule and practice. A society so constituted will determine to have its own way, and will care but little for the will of its Divine Master. Christianity, placed in such hands, will inevitably suffer loss and corruption.

“ So it has proved. All ecclesiastical history confirms it.

“ The downward progress began in the second century. It was fearfully rapid in the fourth and two following centuries. What was then called the Christian church had become a great worldly corpo-

ration, polluted with worldly lusts, and prepared for any further amount of worldliness which the devil might induce its members to receive.

“If the Christians of the second century had not given up the sufficiency and sole authority of the Word of God — and if, as one of the results of that surrender, in the next and succeeding centuries, infant baptism had not been introduced, flooding the church with the ungodly — apostolic Christianity would have been preserved — Popery would have been an impossibility, and national churches could not have existed. Then, instead of being compelled to accord the title of ‘Christian’ to men of no religion, because they happen to be members of churches which have so awfully backslidden from primitive purity, we should have seen the line of separation between the church and the world broadly marked, and membership granted to those only who afforded satisfactory evidence of union with Christ. Incalculable mischiefs and miseries have flowed from the evils above mentioned. Christianity will not be restored to its first lustre till these wrongs are redressed. Bartholomew Hubmeyer’s words (he was a Baptist martyr, who suffered at the stake in 1528,) are very significant, and deserve to be seriously considered by all the friends of Christian reformation. ‘I believe and know,’ he said, ‘that Christendom shall not receive its rising aright, unless Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are brought to their original purity.’”

The infidels of Europe are not so much to blame, after all we have said against them. They saw the open wickedness in our churches, which were filled with unconverted members by infant baptism, but instead of tracing all this to the corrupt fountain, infant baptism, they wrongfully attributed it to Christianity itself; and thus, instead of attacking the dogma of baptismal regeneration as the cause, they aimed their blows at the divinity of the Christian religion.

Thus our inventions turn upon us to torment us. The means we have invented to save the children and increase the membership of our churches, are corrupting and destroying us — eating the very life out of us.

In the face of all these facts, how can you say that infant baptism does good? Now, in answer to your question, are not those baptized in infancy more likely to become converted than those who are not? I emphatically say, *No!* In one church, with a membership of sixty, and some of these immersed, only about fifteen of those sprinkled in infancy profess conversion. In a neighboring church of about ninety members, where immersion is exclusively practiced, they have thirty-six young Christians!

I have seen a well authenticated statement similar to mine. The following report was made by “The Baltimore Sabbath School Superintendents’ and Teachers’ Association,” and published in the *True Union*, 1851:

SCHOOLS.	NO. ATTEND- ING.	PROF. OF RELIGION.	PROPORTION.
Protestant Episcopal..	1,161	28	1 in $41\frac{1}{2}$
Presbyterian(Old Sch'l)	726	8	1 " $90\frac{3}{4}$
(New School)	300	6	1 " 50
English Lutheran.....	553	37	1 " 15
Methodist Episcopal...	4,556	220	1 " $20\frac{3}{4}$
Baptist.....	761	143	1 " $5\frac{1}{3}$

It will be seen by this table that the Baptists have nearly *three times* as many professors of religion in their schools, in proportion to the number attending, as any other denomination; and *seventeen times* as many as are in the Old School Presbyterian Church, one of the strongest advocates of infant baptism.

"In the part of the State of New York," says a minister of the Gospel, "where I resided during the great revival of 1831 and 1832, the proportion in favor of the Baptists was still greater. Hence it appears that infant baptism, so far from being a help, is a real hindrance to early conversion."

M. The facts are again against me.

P. Yes, and they ought to convince every candid mind that the tree which has been planted in the churches by human power, and which we have guarded and cherished so tenderly, does not produce the right kind of fruit.

M. Surely it seems so from this, and the sooner it is cut down the better.

P. And cut down it will be. The charm of infant baptism, as you have called it, is broken. In some churches very little is said about it in comparison with the past. The practice is going gradually out of use; and the time is coming when good men will be astonished and ashamed to find that it was ever tolerated in the churches. God will complete its destruction in his own good time.

“Infant Baptism, linked inseparably in its origin to the dogma of Baptismal Regeneration, and accustomed so long to its companionship, can you wonder that it grieves for it now, and like Rachel, weeping for her children, refuses to be comforted? It is cruel to part them. The recent decline of the one is owing in no small degree to its partial separation from the other. Born at one birth, were these two children of superstition — one was the older by so little that the other grasped his heel — the elder should have had preëminence, but the younger stole his birthright; yet ever, as he speaks, one thinks with the grand old patriarch, that ‘the voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hand is the hand of Esau.’”





TENTH CONVERSATION.

Showing how the Ordinance of Baptism was Changed, and who Changed it.



AFTER the usual friendly greetings, Mr. C., whose countenance indicated that he was anxious to commence the Conversation for the evening, said:

METHODIST. Well, brother E., I am clearly convinced that immersion was practiced by John, Christ's disciples, and the Apostles, and that it was also the practice of the primitive church; and that being the case, both pouring and sprinkling must be human contrivances.

PRESBYTERIAN. Yes, it is self-evident, that as *immersion* was the practice of the Apostles and the primitive church, pouring and sprinkling are innovations. "The custom of the ancient churches," as Bishop TAYLOR says, "was not sprinkling, but *immersion*; in pursuance of the sense of the word (BAPTIZE) in the commandment, and the example of our blessed Saviour." But there is another kind

of testimony I wish to introduce here, and which I have referred to in our previous *Conversations*.

IT IS ADMITTED BY PEDOBAPTISTS THEMSELVES THAT THEY HAVE CHANGED THE ORDINANCE OF BAPTISM, or, rather, that *they have introduced sprinkling and pouring into the church in violation of the commandments of Christ*. Of course the admission proves the *truth of immersion as the primitive baptism*.

Says MATTHIES, a distinguished scholar of Germany, "In the apostolical church, in order that a communion with the death of Christ might be signified, the whole body of the person to be BAPTIZED was immersed in the water or river, and then, in order that a connection with the resurrection of Christ might be indicated, the body again emerged, or was raised out of the water. *That this rite has been changed is, indeed, to be lamented; for it placed before the eyes most aptly, the symbolical meaning of baptism.*"—*Bib. Hist. Dogmat. Expos. Bap.*, p. 116.

"The learned rightly admonish us," says ROSENMULLER, a learned Lutheran, "that on account of [the] mystical sense of baptism, the right of *immersion* ought to have been retained in the Christian church." "And," says Dr. BLOOMFIELD, an eminent Episcopalian, "I agree with KOPPE and ROSENMULLER that there is reason to regret it [immersion] should have been abandoned in most Christian churches."

HUGO GROTIUS, LL.D., one of the most profound scholars of the seventeenth century says: "But that

this customary rite was performed by *immersion*, not by pouring, is indicated both by the proper signification of the word, and the places chosen for that rite, John iii. 23; Acts viii. 38; and many allusions of the Apostles, which can not be referred to sprinkling, Rom. vi. 3-4; Col. ii. 12. Considerably later, the custom of pouring or sprinkling seems to have come into use, for the sake of those who, lying in virulent disease, sought a name with Christ, whom the rest call clinics."

M. If that is the fact, we condemn ourselves: we must give up the ground to the Baptists. If our friends have given evidence against us, the verdict must be rendered according to the testimony. Are you sure that *we first divided the church on the mode of baptism?* Must there not be some mistake about it? How can we be so blind as to admit that we have changed the ordinance of baptism, and then contend for the inventions of men? Why should we condemn others for adhering to the divine example? Who had the right to set aside the Saviour's precept, as Dr. Mosheim, a Lutheran, calls it?

P. No, I am not mistaken. The ordinance of Christ has been changed, or superseded, and new ones introduced into the church by the authority of men. It is a fact, admitted by eminent biblical scholars and ministers. Pedobaptists have done it. The evidence is clear and conclusive. Now, as we admit that we have changed the ordinance of Christ and his Apostles, we must, as you say, give up the

ground to the Baptists; for it is clearly evident that no one has the right to change what God has ordained. But let us hear the witnesses, who are Catholics, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Presbyterians, etc.

The Roman Catholics unblushingly declare it. Here is a note found in a Rhenish Testament, published in 1562, on Matt. iii. 6 — “baptized in Jordan,” etc. “The word baptism signifies a washing: particularly when it is done by immersion, or by dipping, or plunging a thing under water, *which was formerly the ordinary way of administering the ordinance of baptism.*”

“But the church, which can not change the least article of the Christian faith, is not so tied up to matters of discipline and ceremonies. Not only the Catholic church, but also THE PRETENDED REFORMED CHURCHES HAVE ALTERED THIS PRIMITIVE CUSTOM, in giving the sacrament of baptism. They now allow of baptism by pouring or sprinkling on the person baptized. Nay, many of their ministers do it now-a-days, by flipping a wet finger and thumb over the child’s head, or by shaking a wet finger or two over the child, which it is *hard enough to call baptism in any sense.*”

“The Holy Scriptures speak only of baptism by immersion. The dogma of the church is to sprinkle, and we should in this, as in every thing else, follow the church.”—*Roman Catholic Catechism.*

Thus the Roman Catholics tell us that the primi-

tive baptism was *immersion*, and that sprinkling was substituted by them, by the authority their church has in itself to change the ordinances of Christ. "The church claims the right to regulate, at her just discretion, whatever regards the manner of administering the sacraments," says Archbishop KENRICK.

On this ground they have taken away the cup from the laity, instituted the mass, and introduced the dogmas of indulgences, image worship, immaculate conception, etc.

The first law authorizing sprinkling in extreme cases of sickness, was made by a Catholic Pope, Stephen II., 753; immersion, with these exceptions, being the universal practice. The reason why Pope Stephen authorized sprinkling for the sick was the following: The doctrine of baptism being necessary to salvation prevailed to a great extent, and to maintain that immersion alone was baptism, would be the eternal loss of many infants and others. In the eighth century, many of the French clergy, finding it impracticable or very difficult to immerse, began to pour and sprinkle. This practice not having the sanction of any ecclesiastical authority, they appealed to the Pope, who had fled to France to claim the protection of King Pepin. The Lombards had driven him from Rome. The question proposed by the clergy to the Pope was, "*whether it is lawful, in case of necessity, to pour water with a ladle, or with the hands, upon an infant lying sick, and so to*

baptize." Stephen, well inclined to accommodate the French clergy, by the promise of their royal master to take up his cause, and to expel the Lombards from his dominions, gave such a reply as they desired: "This baptism, if it shall have been performed in the name of the sacred Trinity, shall remain firmly; especially when *necessity* also demands that he, who has been kept back by sickness, being in the manner regenerated, may be made a partaker of the kingdom of God." "This is accounted the first law against *immersion*," says BASNAGE. "The pontiff, however, did not dispense with *immersion*, except in case of extreme necessity." Pope Stephen's answer is the first public authority for private baptism and for sprinkling.

M. From this testimony, pouring and sprinkling are the children of the Roman Catholic Church.

P. Yes, and only come by adoption into the Protestant churches.

M. It appears strange to me why the French clergy should ask for the opinion of the Pope, if pouring and sprinkling were apostolical institutions, or the uniform practice of the church. And if apostolical institutions, why should the Pope only authorize the practice in *cases of necessity*? If the clergy were right, they needed no authority from the Pope to ladle the children.

P. That is very true; and hence the evidence is conclusively against us. "It is a singular fact, that sprinkling was not substituted for immersion, either

in England or Scotland (however it might have been resorted to in cases of danger), till after the Reformation. Edward VI. and Queen Elizabeth were both immersed, as the records of royalty testify. The successor of Elizabeth (James I.), was from Scotland, and had been initiated into sprinkling by the Scotch divines, who had imported it from Geneva, and he favored its practice in England." In Scotland, too, says the *Edinburgh Encyclopædia*, a learned work of undoubted authority, "*sprinkling was never used in ordinary cases till after the Reformation.*" "During the persecution of Mary, many persons, most of whom were Scotsmen, fled from England to Geneva. In 1856 a book of the 'Forms of Prayer and Ministration of the Sacraments, approved by the famous and godly learned man, JOHN CALVIN,' was published, in which the administrator is enjoined to 'take water in his hand and lay it upon his forehead.' These Scottish exiles, who had renounced the authority of the Pope, implicitly acknowledged the authority of CALVIN; and, returning to their own country, with KNOX at their head, established sprinkling in Scotland." Such, also, is the testimony of the *Encyclopædia Americana*, and other valuable authorities.

M. Have you any other testimony?

P. Yes, plenty of it. The following *eminent Pedobaptist writers admit that sprinkling and pouring have been substituted for immersion*:

CALVIN, on Acts viii. 38 — "'They went down

both into the water.' Here we see the rite used among men in olden time in baptism; for they put all the body into the water: now, the use is this — the minister doth only sprinkle the body or the head. * * * It is certain that we want nothing that makes to the substance of baptism. Wherefore the church did grant liberty to herself since the beginning to *change the rite somewhat*."

DR. GEORGE C. KNAPP. — "It would have been better to have adhered generally to the ancient practice (immersion), as even CALVIN and LUTHER allowed."

DR. STORR. — "The change of the ancient custom of immersion ought not to have been made."

DR. WHITBY, a learned Episcopalian, in his notes on Rom. vi. 4, says: "It being so expressly declared here, and in Col. ii. 12, that we *are buried with Christ in baptism, by being buried under water*, and the argument to oblige us to conformity to his death by dying to sin, being taken hence, and this *immersion being religiously observed by Christians for thirteen centuries*, and approved by our church, and *the change of it into sprinkling*, even without any allowance from the author of the institution * * * it were to be wished that the custom might be again in general use."

BISHOP STILLINGFLEET. — "Rites and customs apostolical are altered, as dipping in baptism."

GROTIUS. — "The ordinance has been changed from immersion to sprinkling."

BISHOP SMITH.—“The bowl and sprinkling are strictly Genevan in their origin; that is, they were introduced by CALVIN at Geneva.”

DEYLINGIUS, a Lutheran, in a learned work, written about 1708, says: “For as long as the Apostles lived, as many believe, *immersion* alone was in use; to which a certain affusion was afterwards perhaps adjoined; such as the Greeks are at this day, trine immersion being performed, accustomed to use. At length, after the decease of the Apostles, the baptism of clinics became known, when, disease and other extreme necessity prohibiting immersion, aspersion and affusion began to be introduced, which, in the lapse of time, were retained, immersion being neglected. For in a later age, when adults were very seldom baptized, infants were initiated into the sacred rites of Christians by affusion and aspersion.”

DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON, speaking of the Popish practice of withholding the cup from the laity, says: “I think they are as well warranted to make this alteration in that ordinance as we are to substitute sprinkling in the room of the ancient baptism.”

GIESELER, Ch. Hist. Ger. Ed., Vol. III., p. 274,—“For the sake of the sick the rite of sprinkling was *introduced*.”

SIR JOHN FLOYER.—“The church of Rome hath drawn short compendiums of both sacraments: in the eucharist they use only the wafer, and instead of immersion they introduced aspersion.” In King

James' days, he says: "The people grew peevish with all ancient ceremonies, and, through the love of novelty, and the niceness of parents, and the *pretence of modesty*, they laid aside immersion."

PROF. STUART.—"Aspersion and affusion were gradually introduced."

CONYBEARE and HOWSON.—"It must be a subject of regret, that the general discontinuance of this *original form of baptism* [immersion] (though perhaps necessary in our northern climates), has rendered obscure to popular apprehension some very important passages of Scripture."—*Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, Vol. I., p. 439.

"The form of baptism at first was, according to most historians, by immersion; but as Christianity advanced into colder climates, the more convenient mode of sprinkling was introduced."—*New Am. Cyclopædia*, Vol. II., p. 595, article Baptism.

"Baptism was originally performed by immersion, in the name of the Trinity. In case of the administration of the rite to the sick, sprinkling was substituted for immersion."—*Guericke's Church History*.

"The chief points of practice," says Archbishop KENRICK, "on which changes have taken place in the course of ages, are the manner of administering baptism and the eucharist, as also penitential discipline. The solemn mode of baptism was originally by immersion. The church claims the right to regulate, at her just discretion, whatever regards the manner of administering the sacraments."—*Apple-*

ton's *N. A. Cyclopædia*, article *Roman Catholic Church*, page 143.

“Though baptism, as the symbol of an inward change, was conferred at first only upon converts to the Christian faith, according to the prevailing modern opinion of biblical critics, yet at an early period the practice was introduced of baptizing infants, the church requiring security, through certain sponsors, that the children should be brought up to lead a godly and Christian life.”—*Ibid*, p. 595.

COLEMAN.—“After the lapse of several centuries, this form of baptism [sprinkling] gradually took the place of immersion.”

P. Are you satisfied with the proof? It is all from eminent Pedobaptists. If not, I will proceed and give you more.

M. Yes; it is clear, from the authors you have quoted, that we have substituted pouring and sprinkling for immersion. I wonder what our Presbyterian friends can say in defence of CALVIN?

P. I do not know; but there is one thing certain, as Dr. WALL, an Episcopalian, and others, say: that the first “Forms of Prayer and Ministration of the Sacraments,” wherein the administrator is enjoined to “*take water in his hand and lay it upon the child's forehead*,” was published by the Presbyterians, and “approved by that godly and learned man, JOHN CALVIN.”

M. From the quotations you have given, it seems that, next to the Catholics, the Presbyterians are

chargeable with imposing sprinkling on the church.

P. Yes; next to the Catholics, they have done more to cause disturbance in the church, on the subject of baptism, than any other Protestant denomination.

M. But what reasons do the Pedobaptists assign for the change?

P. They give no reasons for the change, but expediency, indifferency, non-essentialism, and decency! As if the Infinitely Wise God would ordain, practice, and command, and the Apostles practice and command, a non-essential and indecent ordinance for his church!

M. There is one thing about which I should like more information. I see it stated that CYPRIAN was the first to defend a change in the ordinance. How is it?

P. As it is the first example cited by Pedobaptists that sprinkling was practiced in the primitive church, I will give you a literal account of it, as well as I can. In the third century there was a sick man, called Novatian, who, not being able to leave his couch, and thinking himself near to death, wanted to be baptized. The question arose, whether pouring would not answer; and by some, viewing baptism a saving ordinance, it was deemed sufficient. So water was poured on him and around him in his bed, to make it as near a case of immersion as could be under the circumstances; which ceremony has been called *clinic baptism*, or *baptism for the sick*: and

hence those who were afterwards baptized on their beds were called *clinics*, and *half Christians*. It was never called baptism, but always looked upon as a substitute, or something that might answer under the circumstances. Novatian himself was never looked upon as baptized; for when afterwards he endeavored to gain a higher position in the church, he was objected to as not being baptized.

M. Do you say that this is the first example quoted in favor of sprinkling and pouring?

P. It is. No other has been produced. It is the first case we can find in all church history which we cite as an example. It was a perversion of the divine command and example of baptism; and was only allowed through the erroneous idea of its friends, that baptism was a saving ordinance; that Novatian, to be saved, must be baptized; and that as it was impossible to immerse him, therefore he must have the water poured on him. Thus, you see, that the change of the ordinance was invented by human expediency as a *means of salvation*. What do you think of that?

M. I am surprised, nay, confounded.

P. It is enough to confound any sensible man, and to make the friends of sprinkling blush. But to proceed: this case of Novatian caused a violent controversy and disruption in the church.

M. Stop, brother E., I must interrupt you here. You say that the case of Novatian caused a bitter controversy in the church. How could that be, if

pouring and sprinkling had been the practice of the church? Why oppose the pouring of Novatian, if affusion had been in use before? Truly it must have been a strange and unknown thing, or they would not have opposed it. As it was the *mode* that caused the opposition, the mode of Novatian's baptism must have been an imposition on the church.

P. It certainly was. And if pouring and sprinkling were of apostolic origin, why confine them to the sick? Why not likewise baptize those in health? But let us return to CYPRIAN. During the controversy, MAGNUS appealed to CYPRIAN, an African bishop, for his opinion. Here is CYPRIAN's reply:

“You ask, dear son, what I think of those who in sickness receive the sacred ordinance (baptism), whether, since they are not washed in the saving water, but have it poured on them, they are to be esteemed right Christians? In the saving sacraments, when necessity obliges, and God grants his indulgence, abridgment of divine things will confer the whole on believers.”

M. For my part I can not see any authority in that for pouring or sprinkling. CYPRIAN acknowledges immersion to be the practice of the church, and tells us “when necessity obliges, *and God grants his indulgence*, abridgment of divine things” may be made.

P. Yes: and from this we see, that both pouring and sprinkling are abridgment of divine things, if

you can call two things an abridgment of a third, which has no resemblance at all to the other two.

M. I agree with you about the abridgment. Why, I see no resemblance at all between immersion and sprinkling, or immersion and pouring. And I should like to know when God ever gave authority to any one to abridge divine things—to change his ordinances.

P. He never did.

M. It seems to me, if I had no better proof than that for sprinkling, I should be ashamed to own it. If Novatian was poured, why don't they pour water for baptism now? If it was for a sick man then, why don't they confine it to the sick now? If it was a means of salvation then, why not a means of salvation now? If the example is worth any thing, it must certainly be worth following! The next I see sprinkled, I shall be very likely to think of the sick man, and ask myself if they are not sick, too! Why sprinkling, according to our own authors, is nothing but *an innovation on an innovation*—*a substitute for a substitute!*

P. Just so. Thus the first instance on record, where the ordinance of baptism was changed, is that of a sick man in the third century, who, not being able to be baptized, had water poured on him and around him on his bed as a means of salvation. The first law authorizing pouring and sprinkling, but only in extreme cases of sickness, was made by a Catholic Pope, Stephen II., 754. In 1311 the

legislature, in a council held at Ravenna, called by the Pope, declared immersion to be immaterial. Then sprinkling was introduced into Scotland and England by Presbyterians from Geneva. The first formula acknowledging sprinkling was published by the authority of John Calvin, in 1556. Then, in 1643, the Presbyterian Assembly of England, by a vote of twenty-five to twenty-four, voted that sprinkling should be the uniform practice.

M. Why all these human appliances to foist sprinkling upon the people if it was a divine institution, commanded by Christ, practiced by the Apostles and the primitive church, and taught in God's Word? What man in his senses would require the sanction of popes and councils for sprinkling in preference to immersion, if sprinkling was the divine mode of baptism?

P. Very true. And if there was no difference between immersion, pouring and sprinkling—if all these modes were in use then—why should there be so much opposition to Novatian's baptism? The fact is, it was looked upon as a substitute for Christian baptism. This was the reason; and *that* interference with divine things was the curse of the church. And so it will ever be. As the introduction of error produced strife and animosities in the church at that time, so has sprinkling ever since been a source of contention and blight, and has had to be sustained by popes, councils, and kings. Its history is traced in angry disputations for its defence,

fines, imprisonments, confiscations and blood. It has a fearful record of outrage standing against it.

In conclusion of our evening's investigations, let me now sum up the result.

M. Do so, if you please.

P. From the incontrovertible proof adduced it is admitted by our friends themselves :

1. That immersion was the exclusive practice of the church for at least two hundred and fifty years, and the general practice for thirteen centuries. They claim no exception but for the sick (clinics), which was regarded and admitted to be an innovation or substitute for the divine institution, and devised as a means of salvation.

2. That pouring and sprinkling have been substituted for the ancient baptism, and that we have made the change—1st, on the ground of its being a saving ordinance; 2nd, on the assumed right to change Christ's ordinances, and introduce new ones into the church; and 3rd, on the ground of expediency, delicacy, modesty, and as Dr. Chalmers, a Presbyterian, calls it, a point of indifferency.

3. That sprinkling did not come into general use until many centuries after the Apostles' times, and then had to be sanctioned by a Catholic Pope, thus having a Popish origin.

Thus we condemn ourselves, and show conclusively that pouring and sprinkling are the inventions of men, and not baptism; and that we have assumed the right to change Christ's ordinance.

We acknowledge it. To us attaches the guilt — on us rests the fearful responsibility. Try as much as we may to shift the responsibility on others, the blame must ever rest upon us. And to us, also, is chargeable all the strife, bitterness, dissensions and persecutions that have taken place in the world on account thereof. Pedobaptists, I repeat, are *the first disturbers of the harmony of the church on the mode of baptism*. And I have been surprised that the Baptists do not charge home upon us more earnestly this fact — that they do not hold up the *Pedobaptists as the first disturbers of the harmony of the Church of Christ on the subject of Baptism*. Let them show where the responsibility rests, and prove to the world, as they can beyond all successful contradiction, that while they are contending for obedience to the command and example of Christ, and to apostolic example and teaching, we are advocating and practicing the *inventions of men*.

M. So they ought, in justice to the truth and themselves. As the case now stands, we charge them as disturbers of the peace of the church, by advocating what we are pleased to call their peculiar views on baptism.

P. Yes, and unjustly. For PEDOBAPTISTS ADMIT THAT THEY HAVE SUBSTITUTED SPRINKLING AND POURING FOR IMMERSION.



ELEVENTH CONVERSATION

On the Right of Changing the Ordinances, or introducing New ones into the Church.

PRESBYTERIAN. In connection with our last evening's subject, let me ask you, brother C., had the Pedobaptists the right to put in the plea of "expediency" or "indifferency" as a warrant for changing the ordinance of Christ, or rather, for introducing new ordinances into the church?

METHODIST. Certainly not. That is self-evident. No one has the right to change the Saviour's commandments. "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

P. This is the test of our love to Jesus — obedience to his commandments. These commandments are an outflowing of eternal wisdom, goodness, and justice. True obedience springs out of love for Jesus. Not simply because they are commandments, but because they are the commandments of Jesus,

the just and holy One. In obedience, there is loyalty; in disobedience, there is rebellion. "Lord, I will follow thee now," says true love for Jesus; but accommodation says, "let me first bury my dead." "Lord, I will obey and follow thee whithersoever thou hast commanded," says love; but, says rebellion, "I will follow thee wherever and however it is convenient."

If we have the right to pour or sprinkle for baptism, we have the right to do any thing else that we may fancy to call baptism. "It is not," says a writer, in defence of the Baptists, "that we ascribe any mysterious efficacy to baptism; it is not with the spirit of a Pharisee we cling to its outward form; nor yet that we rely unduly on its spiritual meaning: but it is, that the right to alter this ordinance involves the right to make other and momentous changes. Said ALGERNON SYDNEY, in the prison, the night before his execution: 'Nephew, I value not mine own life a chip; but what concerns me is, that the law which takes my life may hang every one of you, whenever it is thought convenient.' It was a noble utterance, and embodies the substance of our honest opposition to the claim Pedobaptists urge." If we presume to open the door of human expediency, we shall let into the church a flood of error that will eventually prove its destruction. Is it any wonder that so many of the Congregationalists of New England, after denying the law of Jesus on baptism, should now deny his Divinity, and go

over to Unitarianism? Why should we condemn the Roman Catholics for withholding the cup from the laity, etc.? They do it on the same principle that governs all Pedobaptist churches in substituting sprinkling for baptism. And when we charge them with making void the laws of Christ by their traditions and assumed rights, they retort, and charge us with doing the same thing in sprinkling.

The Roman Catholics tell us frankly that immersion was the primitive baptism, but that they have changed it by the right inherent in their church. "But what authority have you to change the ordinance?" say they to the Protestants, "when you acknowledge no such right. You say that the Bible alone is your rule: why do you not abide by what it teaches, and not change the ordinances according to your views of expediency? You condemn in us what you claim as right for yourselves. Why, your own great scholar, Dr. JOHNSON, has the justice to say that we are as well warranted in withholding the cup from the laity as you are in substituting sprinkling in the room of the ancient baptism."

M. The Roman Catholic has the advantage. But he is wrong in his assumption of right. If the church has the right to change such a solemn ordinance as baptism—to violate Christ's example and commandment, and the practice of the Apostles and primitive church—what has she not the right to do? Of what force are *any* of the commandments of Christ? Where is to end this fearful responsi-

bility which the church assumes? But, thank God! no church has any such right. "Christ has given to his churches no *dispensing* power to set aside his laws; no *legislative* power to make new ones; but has enjoined on them to observe *all things whatsoever* he has commanded."—(Matt. xxviii. 20.)

P. Let us wash our hands of all participation in every such assumption of power. As the Pedobaptists have taken the responsibility of substituting the ordinances of men for those of Christ, let them bear the fearful guilt alone. They have no right to condemn those who are contending for the primitive baptism; for they are only unfurling before the people the flag which we have so ingloriously trampled upon, and contending for principles in which the purity, safety, and perpetuity of the church is alone to be found.

M. If I remember correctly, Mr. BEECHER has affirmed that the church has the right to make such ordinances as it may think best for its advantage. If so, of what use is the Word of God?

P. Mr. BEECHER's position will be best understood from his own words. He says, in a sermon preached in Brooklyn, N. Y., May, 1864: "Show me a thing that experience shows to be good, and I fall back on the liberty which is vouchsafed to every Christian, and which is set forth in the New Testament, and say, by this liberty I do it. There is my warrant and authority. And if experience shows a certain ordinance to be good, it is your right to

adopt that, whether Scripture points it out or not. It is your privilege to do so, because you are Christians, and are free, being bound to no ceremonies and usages."

On this ground *alone* Mr. BEECHER justifies infant sprinkling. Here you will perceive that the right to adopt new ordinances is based on the wisdom and experience of men, independent of the authority of the Bible. Let us look at the assumption. *Sectarian* wisdom invents "things" and "ordinances" for the church, for the accomplishment of the designs of men, and of course proves them to be "good," and successful for that purpose; and then they turn upon us triumphantly, and say: "Show me a thing" or "ordinance to be good, whether Scripture points it out or not, and I fall back on the liberty vouchsafed to every Christian, and which is set forth in the New Testament, and say by this liberty I do it, being bound to no ceremonies or usages."

M. This is certainly the strangest of all strange ideas, emanating as it does from Mr. BEECHER. It is nothing but a revival of the old Catholic doctrine, that *the end justifies the means*. I am very thankful that our preachers do not defend the practice of infant baptism with any such arguments.

P. Now, if these "things" and "ordinances" are wrong, clearly opposed to the commands of Christ, who has the right to adopt them? How can the wisdom and experience of men make that right which is wrong? A "thing" and "ordinance" may

be "good" in the estimation and experience of an individual and sect, and perfect for the accomplishment of the end proposed, but opposed and repugnant to every sense of right as revealed in the Bible. Mohammedan and Catholic theories and ordinances are "good" in the wisdom and experience of a Moslem and Catholic, but they are not *right*; *and no amount of experience can make them right*. Both the wisdom that invented and the practice that proves them good, are scripturally and fundamentally wrong.

M. But you can not suppose Mr. BEECHER to believe the baptism of infants to be opposed and repugnant to scriptural teaching.

P. Of course not. But while he concedes and admits that infant baptism is no where commanded in the Scriptures, he yet justifies it on the ground of experience, and the right of introducing new "things" and "ordinances" into the church, because, forsooth, some people may think they have been or may be productive of "good." Such assumptions evidently teach that Christ and his Apostles did not give the world all that was requisite for doctrine and practice in the church; that, for its perfection in these, the theories and contrivances of men are essentially necessary; or, that Christ and his Apostles gave the church partially and imperfectly developed doctrines and ordinances, suitable only for the exigencies of that period, and then left to human wisdom and ingenuity to change, modify, and perfect, in succeeding ages, that which they had thus left unfinished.

M. Yes, and nicely finished they would be, if left to the wisdom of men to complete!

P. But Mr. BEECHER's whole argument is an unjustifiable assumption of right. He says that these "things" are done "by the liberty which is vouchsafed to every Christian, and which is set forth in the New Testament." If that is the case, then the whole thing topples over, for the New Testament grants no liberty to make new doctrines or ordinances for the church, and to continue in their advocacy and use, because the wisdom and experience of errorists prove them to be "good." If such a right was ever conferred, I should like to know where to find it. The New Testament unequivocally condemns such practices. Here is what it says: "Whatsoever thing I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it."—Deut. xii. 32. "Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."—Matt. v. 19. "If ye love me, keep my commandments."—John xiv. 15. "If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life," etc.—Rev. xxii. 19. Again: it is entirely at variance with the practice of the Apostle. He says: "Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, *and keep the ordinances as I delivered them*

to you.”—1 Cor. xi. 2. “But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but have obeyed from the heart *that form of doctrine which was delivered you.*”—Rom. vi. 17. “For this cause I have sent unto you Timotheus, * * who shall bring you into remembrance of *my ways*, which be in Christ, *as I teach every where in every church.*”—1 Cor. iv. 17.

M. It is certainly a fearful thing to interfere with God’s Word. And how any one can doubt the uniformity of practice by the Apostle, after reading these passages, is beyond my comprehension.

P. The assumptions of Mr. BEECHER are the teachings of Antichrist. If I did not know to the contrary, I should take him to be a Roman Catholic; for by the same kind of reasoning the Catholic justifies all the errors of his church. Nay, he is far more consistent, for to all that Mr. BEECHER has said, he might reply as follows:

“The right to introduce new ordinances into the church, or to change Christ’s ordinances, is clearly evident; and the only difference between us, Mr. Beecher, is, that while you say the liberty to introduce new ‘things and ordinances is vouchsafed to every Christian,’ we maintain that that right belongs only to the Church. The church is ‘bound by no ceremonies or usages.’ ‘Experience’ teaches us that image worship is ‘good’—we are image worshipers. It is our right. We fall back on the ‘liberty vouchsafed’ to the church, and have instituted image worship. ‘Experience’ has taught us that transub-

stantiation, indulgences, and infant sprinkling are 'good,' and by the right given the church, we say, 'by this liberty' we command and practice them. You admit the right of introducing new ordinances, but that right belongs to and is inherent in us. Christ gave it to his church—we are the church. And we have the right to do whatever the church thinks will promote her interests. We have done so. We have introduced other things and made other changes in the church on precisely the same ground, *and our experience has proved them to be 'good.'* Why condemn us? We are carrying out to its full and legitimate extent the principle for which you contend, and that governs you in sprinkling children, and what you now declare is your only authority for sprinkling infants."

M. I wonder how Mr. Beecher's friends like his admissions? He gives up the whole foundation for infant baptism.

P. He can not help it. And so the Catholic continues: "I will condemn you by your own witness, Mr. Beecher. You say that the Bible is the Protestant's only rule of faith and practice. That clearly teaches immersion—there is no sprinkling in it. We admit it, and that immersion was the exclusive practice of the primitive church. At one time it was our universal custom. We introduced sprinkling, and only contend for it on the right of the church to change the ordinances, and on the ground of expediency, 'being bound by no ceremo-

nies and usages established in the New Testament.’”

M. I was not aware that this was the ground occupied by the Roman Catholics in relation to the rite of baptism.

P. It is; and I have not added one iota to their arguments. But the Roman Catholic could continue further:

“Mr. Beecher, you violate your only rule of faith and practice—the clear, express letter of your own constitution of right—your Protestant Bible. You say, again: ‘I concede, and I assert, first, that infant baptism is no where commanded in the New Testament: no man can find a passage that commands it.’ And yet you advocate and practice it, and some of your churches command it. Thus you introduce a new ordinance into your church, and contend for it only on the ground that ‘experience’ has proved it good, and talk loudly of liberty, and expediency, and right, ‘being bound to no ceremonies or usages,’ and yet you condemn us for the same thing. Pray what kind of a standard of right is your Bible? Where can you find in it your liberty to introduce new ordinances into the church? God has given you no such right, and where there is no right conferred there can be no ground of expediency assumed. Mr. Beecher, you ought to be a Catholic.”

M. This reminds me of what I once heard a Baptist minister say. He was riding one day in the stage with a Catholic priest, who, upon learning that

he was a Baptist, exclaimed, holding up his hands in holy horror: "My God! a Baptist! Why you hold nothing in common with the mother church. All other denominations have only our authority for much of their faith and practice; but you are entirely out of the pale of the church." "Thank God for that!" replied the Baptist.

P. Thus, you see, on one point both Mr. Beecher and the Roman Catholic agree; while, on the other hand, the Catholic has a decided advantage. But both advocate the doctrine of Antichrist, set aside the authority of the Head of the Church and the Bible, and for the "doctrines of Christ teach the traditions of men."

But Mr. Beecher's position is totally unfounded, from another point of view. If infant sprinkling is to be judged by his own standard, it must be condemned. A few churches may say that it is 'good,' but the experience of the world proves it to be a great and ruinous evil.*

M. Why, any body of common understanding can see the fallacy of such reasoning as Mr. Beecher's. He says, "we are bound to no ceremonies or usages." The Bible says we are. Are not the Lord's Supper and Baptism ceremonies and usages? To these the Saviour has bound us by positive commands. Who gave any one the right to change or refuse obedience to what he has ordained and commanded? He certainly knew what was better

* See Ninth Conversation.

for his church than our modern teachers, however wise they may be. And where is to be the end? If we have the right to introduce new things and ordinances into the church, and to substitute our inventions for Christ's ordinances, and thus allow the fanciful speculations and innovations of men to take the place of the clearly expressed will of Christ, of what use is the Bible? It does appear to me that some men have a continual itching to improve on the infinite wisdom of Christ; as if he had established laws and institutions for the government of his church to-day, not knowing whether they would be applicable for it to-morrow.

P. And yet that is the very position assumed by many of your ministers. They contend that the church was left in an unfinished state, adapted only for that particular period, leaving it for us to adopt at our pleasure, as the exigencies require, and the progressive state of society demands, just such improvements as we think necessary or expedient for the times.

M. It can't be possible that some of our ministers have got so far along towards Rome! I suppose they take the ground that our church is an *improvement* on the apostolic plan. It is strange, certainly.

P. Your Discipline says: "It is not necessary that rites and ceremonies should in all places be the same, or exactly alike; for they have been always different, and may be changed according to the

diversity of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's Word. *

* * Every particular church may ordain, change, or abolish rites and ceremonies, so that all things may be done to edification."—P. 25.

M. Well, we can't blame our preachers for sticking to the Discipline.

P. Of course not. All that I ask of your preachers is, that they will faithfully carry out the requirements of your Discipline, in every place, and at all times.

The attempt to improve on the laws of Christ has been the cause of endless mischief to the church. When we begin to theorize, innovate, and improve on God's plans, and take things for granted, simply because we desire them to be so, bending the Scriptures to our own vain notions, we set up our wisdom in opposition to the wisdom of God, arraign the Bible before the tribunal of human intelligence, and appeal to the prejudices of carnal minds for their justification.

M. The best, safest, and wisest way for us all is to keep as near as we possibly know how to the simple, literal doctrines and usages taught in the Scriptures. We ought to guard against the least innovation.

P. Yes, so wisdom teaches. The exhortation of the Apostle Paul to the Colossians applies with equal force to us: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradi-

tion of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”—Col. ii. 8. The rebuke of Jesus is very applicable to our liberal Christians: “Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.”—Matt. xv. 6. The introduction of error is like making a small outlet for the water in an embankment of a river. The continued action of the current wears the opening wider, and wider, until at length the obstruction gives way, and the angry waters sweep over the country, producing devastation, sickness, and death. The assumption of power by the priesthood, the introduction of long, mystifying articles of faith in the churches, the use of obscure theological terms, that require almost a life time to understand, and the invention and use of complicated church machinery for the purpose of grinding the people—have ever been a source of contention and strife, and the blight and curse of the church.

When the church was first established, it was pure, simple, and uniform in its doctrines and practice; for the Apostles taught “the same things every where in every church”—“one Lord, one faith, and one baptism.” Then did the people keep from the heart that form of doctrine and ordinances as delivered unto them. But soon, too soon, alas! glided the serpent into the Christian Eden, and hid among the flowers, breathing poison, and causing blight and desolation. Then began men to teach traditions for the commandments of God, and to

claim authority to rule in the church. Then came the union of Church and State—then came the struggle for supremacy between the bishops of Carthage and Rome—then came the man of sin, claiming to have the keys of heaven and hell, to be God's vicegerent on earth, with his blasphemous title of "our Lord God the Pope," and with bloody persecutions for those who would not hold him as supreme head of the church, with his legates, cardinals, archbishops, bishops, and an almost endless list of conjured officers and titles, and conspicuous in whose train were imposture, traditions, dogmatical assumptions, among which may be mentioned purgatory, the mass, sprinkling for baptism, image worship, indulgences, immaculate conception, etc.

Then, again, look at the Pedobaptists after the Reformation; not having yet learned the fearful results of departure from God's Word, but retaining some of the errors of Popery, persecuting for opinion's sake with fines, imprisonment and the stake—advocating and maintaining the union of Church and State, with ungodly rulers as the head; compelling men to submit and to pay for the preaching of doctrines they could not conscientiously believe, and to support ministers in whom they had no faith—ministers whose mouths had to be stopped with fat benefices, and who thought it their right to farm out God's heritage.

Thus the tide of error swept over the earth, beginning at first in what Pedobaptists call "indif-

ferency," "non-essentials," "little things," and "liberty;" culminating in a flood of desolation, deep, dark and ruinous to the liberty and spirituality of the church and the souls of men. Surely the church has suffered enough from the ungodly whims, foolish notions, assumptions, and traditions of men, to warn us against the first encroachments of error, and to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." What if men do call us narrow-minded, bigoted, and intolerant. "We ought to obey God rather than man." What if they do cry out, "Liberty, liberty! non-essential, non-essential!" We see what licentiousness and ruin *their liberty* and *non-essentials* have brought into the church. Let us set our faces as a flint against it. When the Ephesians cried out, in wild enthusiasm, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" the Apostles rolled on the more vigorously the "stone" that "was cut out of the mountains without hands," until at last, by its divine power, Diana herself came tumbling down in ruins to the ground.

There can be no compromise with error. Ours is an aggressive as well as a defensive warfare. While we are set for the defence of the truth, we are also called to "wrestle against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Let us abide by, therefore, defend, and contend earnestly for the truths of "the glorious Gospel of the blessed God." "Moral victories are

gained in passes — passes narrow as that between Mount *Ætna* and the sea. No great calamity can come to virtue but through the undefended gateway of some small neglect; no final peace triumphs, till you have stopped each crevice in the outer wall.”

[Thus closed the evening’s investigation.]





TWELFTH CONVERSATION.

Pedobaptist Opposition to Immersion.



POSITION to immersion being the subject for investigation this evening, brother C. began the Conversation by saying :

“ Can you inform me, brother E., what is the cause of the opposition to immersion by so many of our ministers, when they admit it to be baptism ? ”

PRESBYTERIAN. I can not account for it on any reasonable ground. There is, however, one thing certain, that from the time of the substitution of sprinkling and pouring by Pedobaptists for the primitive baptism, and more especially since the time the clergy, finding it much more comfortable to sprinkle than immerse, assumed the responsibility, and declared the mode immaterial, they have brought all their influence to bear on the public mind in favor of sprinkling. Many of them will not immerse; and others, holding that conscience is the judge of the mode of baptism, yet labor, with all the sophis-

try they are able, to persuade those who believe it to be their duty to have their consciences satisfied by immersion, that any thing else will answer the same purpose! — nay, will prevent them from being immersed if they possibly can! Why are they so much opposed to immersion, when they declare it is *baptism*, and an *ordinance of God*? Why will they not allow candidates to have their consciences satisfied by immersion, after having asserted so loudly that it is the “answer of a good conscience?” Baptists oppose sprinkling, because they believe it to be an *institution of man*; but our ministers ridicule and oppose immersion, while believing it to be an ORDINANCE OF GOD?

METHODIST. Yes; and it is shameful and wicked.

P. Have you not noticed of late a disposition and effort on the part of some to form a combination in which loyalty to Christ and the Bible is to be repudiated, and all distinctive denominational doctrines and usages are to be ignored, or kept in the back ground: a grand union of all creeds and parties, of spirits of all colors, and to join which a man is only required to sink his individuality — his independence — his manhood; and turn his conscience over for safe-keeping to humanitarian and liberal Christian teachers? That is all. Very accommodating, is it not?

M. Well, well, that is something new.

P. New! no, not new, but old — only dressed up in a new garb. If you look at the leading spirits

in the movement, and a little below the surface, you will see the old leaven of evil under a new name, working for the accomplishment of the old end—the destruction of the doctrines and ordinances of the Bible, that have so long stood as a breakwater against the encroachments of the pride of human wisdom and philosophy, and the inventions and expedients of theological doctors. But on none do the blows fall so thick and heartily as upon the Baptists, seemingly the particular object of a united attack. Here is a declaration of war to the end against the Baptists, which I cut to-day from a liberal paper.

“We, the undersigned, * * * do hereby pledge ourselves to secure, under God, an open communion, and the recognition of one evangelical ministry. * * * And we furthermore solemnly pledge ourselves to stand by each other in securing these ends.”

There we have it—a set of men boasting of liberalism, and freedom of thought and action, pledged to destroy the restricted communion churches, and especially the Baptist churches, against which they seem to have a particular spite, and array their chief opposition. What a nice time they will have before they accomplish their undertaking!

M. But why this coalition against the Baptists?

P. I know no reason, unless it be that the Baptists resist alike the efforts of infidels and the innovations of liberal Christians: for one would sweep away the Bible, and the other substitute the devices

of men for the ordinances of Christ. One cry, almost splitting their lungs in the effort, "Down with the inspiration of the Bible, and the divinity of Christ, and up with human reason! Down with sectarianism, and up with the free church and liberal Christianity!" And the other, with a glad voice, shout, "Down with immersion and close communion, and up with sprinkling and open communion!" But behind the curtains, the wire-workers rub their hands in glee, and laugh heartily at such Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Methodists, Lutherans, etc., who are doing their ignoble work, only in a different way.

M. I never thought it possible that we could come to this—to be co-workers with Unitarians, Spiritualists, Universalists, Infidels, and liberal Christians! True, I am opposed to close communion myself, but I was not aware it placed me in such company before!

P. But let us return to the opposition to immersion. Considering the great opposition it has had to meet, it is surprising how its friends have become so numerous.

M. I thought the friends of immersion were a small and insignificant body.

P. Not so. Nearly all Pedobaptists believe in immersion, and thousands in our churches have been immersed; and then there are over two millions of Baptists in North America; besides, there are the Greek and Oriental churches, with a popula-

tion of 100,000,000, "though adopting the baptism of children, yet retain immersion to this day, as essential to the validity of the rite, and, as BUNSEN remarks, 'deny that there is any efficacy in the Western form of baptism.'"

M. Why, you astonish me! But why the opposition to immersion?

P. There is no just cause for it. We've departed from the practice of the Apostles and the primitive church: that is clearly evident from the admissions of the prominent authors I have given you. And because the Baptists will not sanction rebellion against Christ's ordinance, we declare war against them from the pulpit and the press, flooding the country with our books and pamphlets, charging them with "exclusiveism," illiberality, bigotry, and ignorance; at the same time boasting of our own liberality, and superiority in culture, refinement and taste. And if they reply to our abuse, we cry out: "Why don't you let us alone?" but continue our warfare, endeavoring to throw the blame on them.

Various are the ways our ministers have tried to throw contempt on the ordinance of baptism—to prejudice the public mind against it. They have blunderingly performed the rite, half immersing some, and baptizing others face downwards. They have pronounced it unscriptural and indelicate, and then immersed both sexes. A minister in Minnesota labored three hours to prove immersion not baptism, and then went and immersed a candidate.

Another preached a sermon against immersion, and then invited candidates for baptism forward, when two gentlemen stepped up and requested to be immersed. He did not like that kind of a finish to his masterly argument, and snappingly spoke out, "We've got to go to the water!" hurried to the place of baptism, and before half of the congregation could get there, had the ceremony over. He seemed angry and ashamed of the task.

M. That minister should never baptize me. A man must have a queer kind of conscience that will do that. And a candidate that will submit to, and the people that tolerate such mockery, must be very short-sighted, too. I have seen such like cases myself. There was Mr. Pleaseall, and Mr. Strange, who often said immersion was an indelicate ordinance, and yet did, according to their say so, indelicate things, by immersing. Then there was Mr. Twister, and Mr. Commode, who were "great" in quoting "baptism is the answer of a good conscience," and who said all that a person had to do was to believe any thing baptism, and it would answer; and yet if any one wanted to satisfy his conscience by being immersed, they would not baptize him if they could help it. It did seem as if their consciences had to govern all the rest; and that they wanted to impose on our common sense.

P. I have listened, time and again, to sermons on baptism, by ministers who believed in immersion, from which you would naturally conclude

there was nothing but sprinkling mentioned in the Bible. To knowingly suppress a truth, is to preach an imperfect Gospel, and mutilate God's Word.

M. And every one that adds to, or takes from God's Word, incurs a fearful responsibility.

P. Then look, also, at the opposition manifested by the friends of infant baptism. To doubt its validity, or to speak against it, makes many of its advocates oppose you bitterly, and frequently with anger. They manifest a strange sensitiveness about it. Why this, if they are satisfied it is of divine origin? And then, to what strange means they will resort to prevent their sprinkled children from being baptized. They not only choose the baptism and church for the child, but when, in after years, it discovers the great injustice done it, and requires immersion, they use that very wrong as an argument to prevent it from doing right. "Why do you wish to be immersed?" asks the minister. "You have been baptized. Do you want to censure those who baptized you? Do you wish to say you are wiser and better than the church, your minister and parents? It is sacrilege to be rebaptized."

M. Are you not over-coloring the matter, brother E.?

P. I am speaking what I know to be the truth. Here is a little book, printed by the Presbyterian Board of Publication, entitled "Bible Baptism," in which the author says, "To reject their present baptism is *very sinful*. They cast an insult on their

pastor, on their church, on the whole denomination, and on the great mass of Christians in all the world. They also bring divisions and unhappiness into their families." "Besides, in so doing, they change a true Bible baptism for a sectarian baptism."—*P. 4.* All of which justifies what I have heretofore said, and is sheer pettifoggery, an appeal to sympathy and prejudice, and not to principle. There never would have been a Christian in the world if all had been governed by this Presbyterian's logic. "If you join the Christians," says a Pharasaic Jewish Rabbi, "you will do a very sinful thing, cast an insult on your priest and on your church, and bring divisions and unhappiness into your families." And, says the Roman Catholic priest, "Why do you wish to become a Presbyterian, my son? Do you wish to say our church is wrong—that you are wiser and better than all the great men who have been Catholics? Your father and mother are Catholics: the church is good enough for them, and so it is for you. We are satisfied with our church relation, and so should you be. Take care, or you will fall into the snare of the devil—you will commit sacrilege!"

M. The reasoning of the Catholic is just as good as the Presbyterian's; and as logical in conclusion as the man who thought it was right to carry the grist to the mill in one end of the bag and a stone in the other, *because his father had done so before him.*

P. The truth is, such men want to make con-

sciences for their people; they seem to think that none have the right to reject what they imposed upon them in infancy. "This work [sprinkling] is done," says the same Presbyterian author, "and can not be undone." "True," he might have said, "we have no authority in the Bible for doing it, but we have taken the responsibility; and you need not trouble yourselves about a thing of which you were unconscious at the time. If you reject what we have done for you, *you will insult us, and commit a very great sin!*"

M. I don't know but what he speaks the truth, when he says that Presbyterians who join the Baptists bring divisions and unhappiness into their families; for Presbyterians are bitterly opposed to their children becoming Baptists, and have used very harsh measures to prevent it. There was one who took an orphan to raise, and because she wanted to be immersed, threatened to turn her out penniless on the world. It does seem that the author knew what he was writing about.

P. And here is another case, related to me by a prominent actor in the scene: In the town of L., in the State of Illinois, during a protracted meeting in the Baptist church, the only daughter of a Congregationalist deacon attending the meetings, became interested for her soul's salvation, and was converted to Christ. Led to the examination of the Scriptures on the subject of baptism, she felt she had never been baptized, and wanted to unite with

the Baptist church, the Congregationalist minister refusing to immerse her. She experienced much opposition at home, mingled with persecution, her father threatening to disinherit her if she persisted in her course. At the meeting on Friday evening she felt that she must be baptized, and signified her intention of being present at the covenant meeting next day to relate her experience, with the view of being baptized, with others, on the following Sabbath. Believing it to be her duty to inform her parents of her decision, she accordingly revealed to them her purpose, when sorer trials than ever experienced burst upon her. A council of war was held, to which the pastor, deacons, and principal brethren were summoned. After much consultation about what was to be done, it was decided that she should be taken from town and kept over Sabbath to prevent her being baptized. On Saturday morning, the day she expected to attend covenant meeting, she was informed that she must leave town. Her pleadings and remonstrances were of no avail; and, amid tears and sobs, she was taken by force and conveyed in a carriage to the town of O., twenty miles distant, and kept over the Sabbath. Then she was sent to a Congregational school in the town of R., where the principal received a charge, which was under all circumstances to be strictly enforced, that she should never be allowed to attend a Baptist church while in the institution. But all this could not prevent her from becoming a Baptist. While

at the institution, she wrote to the pastor of the Baptist church for counsel; and I have the pleasure of reading you his letter in reply:

F—, June 27, —.

MY DEAR SISTER M.: Permit me to say that I am highly gratified to hear from you, and more especially that you are still holding on your way, resolutely determined to serve the Lord, and follow the blessed Jesus in all his ways. I often think of the trials you endured at L., and my prayer is that you may persevere unto the end, and then out of all these troubles the Lord will deliver you. As soon as that time of life arrives in which you are in one sense your own, I would by all means obey the Lord Jesus in the ordinance of baptism. This will not only augment your comfort and happiness, but you will honor Christ by thus making a public profession of your faith in him. He being our Saviour and Redeemer, and having commanded us thus to show our love for him ("If ye love me, keep my commandments"), we surely owe him, *above all others*, the most perfect and absolute obedience. Thus we show to others our love for Jesus. And then, obedience to Christ is never inconsistent with true love to parents; neither is it disrespectful to *legitimate* parental authority. The authority of the parent becomes unlawful whenever it undertakes to supersede the authority of Jesus Christ. He must stand first in our homage, first in our affections, and first in our obedience. Hence, obedience to parental government, when it annuls the commands of God, is disobedience to the laws of Christ, and ill treatment of him who died for us, and to whom we owe every thing, both in this life and that which is to come. Thousands have died, rather than disobey Christ; and believe me, my dear sister, it is infinitely better to die in the path of obedience, than live in the way of disobedience, from any cause whatever.

May the Lord be with you and bless you, is the prayer of your affectionate friend and pastor.

R—.

On arriving at age she obeyed the Lord Jesus, and united with a Baptist church.

M. That was cruel. For my part, I say, if our children want to be baptized when they grow up, let them. And yet, I have heard of many of our friends opposing their children. There was a Presbyterian who compelled his son to leave home because he joined the Baptists. And I knew a young lady, formerly a Congregationalist, who was much opposed for the same reason. And there is a Lutheran minister, who is so much afraid of immersion, that he makes it a special point to tell his people to beware of the Baptists. Then there was one of our ministers, who, notwithstanding he immersed, said that immersion would do for gulls, but not for sheep.

P. That is decidedly rich. What a nice compliment he paid some of your members, and what a nice position he occupied.

M. What other reason can you give for the opposition to immersion?

P. That immersion is always protesting against the right of men to resort to expedients in divine things—against our right to change the ordinances of God. And, again, immersion ever speaks of cross-bearing, self-denial, following Christ. But what cross-bearing and self-denial is there in sprinkling? Does it not show a preference for ease and comfort?

M. It surely looks like it. There is one thing that inclines me to believe it true. When some ministers preach against immersion, they are very

fond of trying to prove that *pouring* is baptism. And yet they will not pour if they can help it.

P. Another reason is, *immersion always condemns our sprinkling.*

M. Yes, that is clear.

P. It is my firm belief, from what I have seen of our opposition to the Baptists, that that opposition does not arise so much from our disbelief of the truth of, and our aversion to, immersion and restricted communion, as it does from the consideration that, as held and practiced by the Baptists, they are ever proclaiming against our theories of baptism and communion as unscriptural—ever charging us with the fact of changing the ordinances of Christ—ever denying our right to interfere with the Gospel plan—ever speaking against human expediency in divine things—ever denying the invention of baptismal regeneration. That is what makes us feel so sensitive, and oppose them so much. We make no objection to immersion and restricted communion when practiced by any of our churches; but how bitterly we condemn the usages of the Baptists. Why so, if not for the reasons I have stated?

M. I must agree with you about the opposition to immersion, but close communion I oppose myself.

P. We will look at that hereafter. So, to resume. I have, with you, seen many curious things among our ministers. There was Mr. C., who, rather than immerse, got a Baptist minister to do it for him;

but the candidate had the good sense to declare that he wouldn't belong to any church whose minister preached that baptism was the answer of a good conscience, and then refused baptism because the conscience of the candidate required immersion. So he joined the Baptists.

M. I admire his good sense.

P. The following incident was given me by an eye-witness. The Rev. Mr. STAGEMAN was called upon by a wealthy gentleman to immerse him. After exhausting the usual arguments and persuasions customary on such occasions, Mr. STAGEMAN flatly refused to grant the request. The gentleman told him it was his conviction of duty from reading the Bible, and he could not violate it, and said he would apply to the Baptist minister. Here was a dilemma. The Presbyterians would lose a wealthy member, and to immerse him would place the Rev. gentleman in a strange position before society, for it was well known he was opposed to immersion. But there was no alternative; so he consented. Now, how to do it, was the next thing. He had never immersed any one; nor had he seen any immersed. He would have a platform built over the water, and then, with a small effort, he could dip him. I do not know whether he chuckled over this original expedient or not, but I have no doubt there was chuckling some where. Accordingly the arrangements were all perfected, and Mr. S. led the candidate to a proper depth, said a few words by

way of ceremony, and proceeded to dip him. But, ah!

“The best laid schemes of mice and men,
Gang aft agley :”

In the very act the Rev. STAGEMAN lost his balance, and gave the audience a fine specimen of lofty tumbling by plunging head first into the water, on the candidate, and came up blowing like a porpoise; when, leaving the benediction to take care of itself, he took a bee-line for home. That was his first and last effort. I suppose he did not like the finishing stroke to his wonderful invention.

M. Ah, ha! What a fall was there. I can't help but laugh—though it is a solemn thing to trifle with God's ordinance. Served him right. Ah, ha!

P. Trifling, yes, mockery. I should have taken that as a just punishment for my wickedness.

M. It is shameful for ministers to act so. It would not appear so bad if they did not acknowledge immersion as an ordinance of God. I can not comprehend it.

P. I have been at a loss to understand it myself. I have looked at their conduct in the most favorable and charitable light I know how; and, after all, I am forced to the conclusion—it is a greater cross to immerse than sprinkle. It is more inconvenient and unpleasant for them to go down into the water and bury a believer with Christ in baptism, like Philip, than to stand in a comfortable church and

put a few drops of water on the head from a bowl! They lack the self-denying spirit which their Master and the Apostles had.

M. But the servant should not be greater than his Lord. He has commanded and requires it.

P. But they will not, if they can prevent it; but try every art to induce the people to be sprinkled. Why this, if not afraid of the cross? Why refuse to immerse and be immersed, when they acknowledge it baptism? What keeps them out of the water, if it is not their own ease and comfort, and the odium they fear will be heaped upon them? They can not say that sprinkling will do as well, for in doing so they charge the Saviour and the Apostles with folly.

Many, it is to be feared, first consult their pride, that looks in dread at the water. Then they begin to look for an easier way, which is not hard for one to find who is bent on securing it; and try and persuade themselves that sprinkling will do as well as immersion. And then, persisting in the wrong, they begin to think they are right, and end in arguing for its defence. The next step, to save themselves from going into the water, shaking in their shoes at the very idea, is to use their efforts to keep others from following the Saviour, by appealing to their prejudices and whims, and by ridiculing, in almost every possible way, the divine ordinance, appealing to and arraying against it some of the worst passions of the unregenerate heart. Thus do

they reach the bottom of the *sliding scale*. Strange that the people can not see that ease and self-interest are the foundation of the earnest efforts of many ministers in advocating sprinkling for baptism.

M. That seems a little severe, but I believe it to be the truth. Many of our ministers, though believers in immersion, will not immerse if they can possibly avoid it. It does seem from this that they sprinkle because it is the easiest way — not as great a cross. But yet we should not be too severe on them; for it does look a little hard, to be sure, to go down into the water, sometimes cold and icy-like, as our Baptist friends do, when they can stand in a nice warm house, take a bowl of comfortable water, dip the tips of their fingers in it, and place them on the heads of the candidates, as I have seen some of them do.

P. Yes, and they call that sprinkling — they call it *baptism*; and presume to give the Bible as authority for it. I tell you, my brother, pride, with many, is at the bottom of this opposition to immersion. We are too proud to follow our Saviour, by being buried with him in baptism. We want a less mortifying and self-denying method, and we invent it.

M. It must be as you say, though it is lamentable to have to acknowledge it. There are hundreds who stand connected with Pedobaptist churches, who believe that immersion is exclusively Christian baptism, yet who have never been baptized. Why

is it so, if they are not, as you say, afraid of the cross — of the finger of scorn being pointed at them? I can account for it in no other way.

P. How can you, when many of us look upon immersionists as a poor, bigoted, and deluded people; and smile, in our fancied superiority, that we are more enlightened, decent, and refined. We contend that we have a more excellent way than that in which the Saviour and the Apostles walked. We look on with pity and contempt when we see a candidate immersed, and thank God we are above that!

M. And yet going down into the water in the coldest days of winter never seems to hurt the Baptists. Why they love it, and they love it because they have a consciousness of obedience to the Saviour's command, and go into the water cheerful and happy, singing with glad voices—

“Through floods and flames, if Jesus leads,
I'll follow where he goes.”

P. We talk of immersion endangering the health, and all that kind of nonsense; but I have yet to see and hear of the first one who has suffered any disability therefrom; and I have seen young and delicate ladies go into the water and come out with the ice on their garments, but with faces all radiant with love to Jesus. And yet one Presbyterian author says: “There is no doubt that individuals are every

year laid in untimely graves on account of their extravagant views in this matter.”

M. I know all about that kind of nonsense. It is the same old tune I have heard played by many of our friends for the want of argument. I am inclined to think he is more afraid of the water himself than he is of the death of the baptized.

P. I see by the clock it is now late, so, if you please, we will close our evening's Conversation. In our next Conversation let us examine the Baptists; but as I am not fully prepared to enter upon the investigation now, I propose that we postpone our meetings for some time, so that I can enter more understandingly on the subject.

[This being satisfactory to brother C., they adjourned to meet some time in the future.]





THIRTEENTH CONVERSATION.

The Baptists Examined.



HAVING concluded his private investigations, Mr. E. called on his Methodist friend and invited him to his house to resume the Conversations. Mr. C. was very anxious to examine the Baptists, and, soon after entering, commenced the conversation.

METHODIST. Well, brother E., I am glad you are ready to resume our Conversations. I am convinced that the Baptists have the best of the argument on baptism, and I should like to know more about them.

PRESBYTERIAN. I should prefer listening to a Baptist: I may do them injustice. I have heretofore had no very friendly feelings for them, and certainly no love for their peculiar views.

M. The more likely you will be to speak nothing in their favor but the truth. You will be an impartial witness. I confess that I have been very much

prejudiced against them. They are always harping on baptism, and, as I have been told, think it necessary to salvation, and consider themselves better than other Christians. After all, I am inclined to believe they are a good sort of people, though rather ignorant and bigoted.

P. Ah, ha! To think that you, and myself, and our friends, should talk about the Baptists being ignorant and bigoted, and speak so patronizingly of them! In what denomination can you find more eminent scholars and devoted Christians? Listen to what Dr. CHALMERS, the celebrated Presbyterian of Scotland, had to say of the Baptists of England:

“Let it never be forgotten of the particular Baptists of England that they form the denomination of Fuller, and Carey, and Ryland, and Hall, and Foster; that they have originated one among the greatest of all missionary enterprises; that they have enriched the Christian literature of our country with authorship of the most exalted piety, as well as of the first talent and the first eloquence; that they have waged a very noble and successful war with the hydra of Antinomianism; that, perhaps, there is not a more intellectual community of ministers in our island, or who have put forth, in proportion to their number, a greater amount of mental power and mental activity in the defence of our common faith; and what is better than all the triumphs of genius or understanding, who, by their zeal and fidelity, and pastoral labor among the congregations which they

have reared, have done more to swell the lists of genuine discipleship in the walks of private society, and thus both to uphold and to extend the living Christianity of our nation.”—*Close of a discourse on Romans*, iv. 9–15.

M. That speaks well for his heart, any how.

P. Yes, and for his head, too. But let us look at the Baptists. The “Baptists, then, properly defined, are those who hold that the baptism of Christian believers is of universal obligation, and practice accordingly. And they acknowledge this because they acknowledge no master but Christ; no rule of faith but his Word; no baptism but that which is preceded and hallowed by personal piety; no church but that which is the body of Christ, pervaded, governed, and animated by his Spirit.” As to your insinuation, that they believe in baptismal regeneration, it is groundless. It is Pedobaptists who believe in baptismal regeneration, not the Baptists. And such a charge comes with a poor grace from you, considering what your Discipline says.

M. I should like to know what our Discipline has to do with baptismal regeneration.

P. Let me read you a few extracts from it:

“Dearly beloved, forasmuch as * * * our Saviour Christ saith, Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom of God:—I beseech you to call upon God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that of his bounteous

goodness he will grant to these persons that which by nature they can not have; that they, being baptized with water, may also be baptized with the Holy Ghost, and being received into Christ's holy church, may continue lively members of the same."—P. 138.

M. Stop, brother E., does our Discipline say that? Let me see. [Reads.] It is as you say.

P. Yes, and it says more: "We call upon thee for these persons, that they, coming to thy holy baptism, may also be filled with thy Holy Spirit. Receive them, O Lord," etc.—139. "Well beloved, who have come hither, desiring to receive holy baptism, you have heard how the congregation hath prayed, that our Lord Jesus Christ would vouchsafe to receive you, to bless you," etc.—140. "Grant that the persons now to be baptized may receive the fullness of thy grace, and ever remain in the number of thy faithful and elect children."—143.

M. Well, I have nothing more to say. Our Discipline certainly teaches baptismal regeneration, whether we believe it as Methodists or not.

P. You charge the Baptists with always harping on baptism. Did it ever occur to you that we preach more on baptism than they do?

M. No; that can not be.

P. It is so. The fact is, when they preach about it, we always raise a hubbub. They strike such hard blows with the Bible, that they make us sore, restive, and kick. "The Baptists have the advan-

tage of us," said Prof. Porson: when they preach immersion, it is what we believe; but in preaching immersion they overthrow our sprinkling. And then we, to set it up all right again before the people, have to change the issue, and charge our guns with "non-essential" shot, and pepper them for what we call their exclusiveness and illiberality. There's where the trouble is.

M. Your illustration is a novel one, and it may be as you say. It certainly accounts for the fact, that when a Baptist minister preaches a series of sermons on baptism, our preachers open their batteries all around.

P. Yes, then we make common cause. The Presbyterian and Congregationalist will denounce the Methodists for their Episcopacy, ministerial aristocracy, and closed class-meetings and love-feasts, and the Methodists will denounce them for their particular doctrines; but once let a Baptist appear in the field, and we cease hostilities, form a coalition, and present a united front against him. We are lovingly united then. It is a wonder how the Baptists have made such progress against so much opposition.

M. What you say is too true. I once listened to a debate on baptism by a Presbyterian and Baptist, when one of our celebrated controversialists preached a sermon on the evening of the day when the debate closed, over two hours in length, against the Baptist.

P. The truth is, *we are the cause of all this controversy on the mode of baptism.* There would have been no trouble about it, if we had not changed the ordinance—if we had not substituted pouring and sprinkling for immersion. That of itself is sufficient justification for the course of the Baptists. When they preach immersion, and deny our right to substitute our whims therefor, we have no reason to complain. All the discussion, contention, and strife there has been in the church on this subject is justly attributable to us.

Talk about the Baptists preaching too much on baptism! Why, you can hardly open the New Testament without your eye resting on some thing connected with it. Did Jesus think and talk too much of baptism when, in his grand charge to his disciples, after his resurrection, he said: “Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you?”—Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. That is what the Baptists are doing—teaching and baptizing. Jesus has put “BAPTIZE” in their commission, and they dare not suppress it, nor erase it. If the Pedobaptists will complain of this, let them; but for the Baptists they must still go on and teach the people to observe all things whatsoever the Master hath commanded. To be silent, would be criminal. Guilty of such a breach of trust, how could we expect them to be faithful in other things?

Eloquently has one of their writers said: "Can the Baptists compromise their principles for any reason? They certainly can not. Truth is a unit — must be a unit, or cease to be truth; and it can not be mutilated in any part without peril to its existence as a whole. There is no neutrality here. Gospel truth, as Baptists hold it, is a sacred legacy that has been handed down to them from sword-point to sword-point. Every item of it has fluttered over the gibbet. The will that bequeathed it has been read in the lurid flames of Baptist martyrs from the days that bonfires were kindled to torture them in the streets of pagan Rome, to the days of James the First, in the streets of Christian London. Almost every hill and valley of Europe has glowed with these fires. The standard lamps by which men read our principles all through the dark ages, were the writhing bodies of Baptist Lollards, and Waldenses, and Petrobrussians. Bold men, like Jerome of Prague, Leonard Keyser, and George Wagner; delicate women, such as Elizabeth Gaunt, Joan Boucher, and Ann Askew, have tracked down the illustrious train of burning ones from the days of Peter and Paul. Late as 1611, the very year in which James published the common English Bible, he carefully burnt the body of that sturdy old Baptist, Edward Wightman, in the streets of Lichfield, that Englishmen might have a good light to read its Baptist truths by. Wightman's crime consisted in saying, 'That the baptizing of infants is an abomin-

able custom: that the Lord's Supper and Baptism are not to be celebrated as they are now practiced in the Church of England.'"

Have you ever noticed how morbidly sensitive some of us are on baptism?

M. No; how is it?

P. Our ministers may advocate sprinkling and denounce immersion, as much as they please; it is all right and commendable, and our people largely enjoy it. But when a Baptist preaches on baptism, how our quills start up. How we commence playing on the old string "non-essential." How we cry out, "indifferency" — "the answer of a good conscience," etc. And yet we won't allow a Baptist minister to satisfy his conscience by preaching immersion if we can prevent it. The truth is, we are wrong on sprinkling, and they are right on immersion. They preach what the Bible teaches, while we labor to prove that it does not mean what it says. Our ministers are ever rolling the stone up the hill, but never reach the top.

M. How can they, when the Saviour's baptism, and the Eunuch's, and Paul's, are right in the way? "Common sense" wouldn't undertake it.

P. The objection you have made against the Baptists has been urged strongly by the Presbyterians. Dr. FAIRCHILD, in his work on Baptism, published by the Presbyterian Board of Publication, says: "They [the Baptists] lay very great stress on immersion, and seek every way to magnify its

importance. Immersion is the most prominent topic in their discourses." "Among the many thousands who listen to their instructions may there not be multitudes who receive the impression that immersion is the great essential to salvation — the safest passport to heaven."—Pp. 12, 13.

What shall I say of this?—shall I call it slander? Every Baptist minister knows it is not true. Every Baptist minister knows, and so would our Doctor of Divinity have known it also if he had opened his eyes to the truth, that the Baptists preach always that regeneration comes before baptism — that they never baptize a person until they believe he is converted.

In reply to these charges of our Presbyterian Doctor, a Baptist minister, eminent for his attainments, and abundant in labors, says:

"Is 'immersion the most prominent topic in their public discourses?' I have never discovered it. I have attended Baptist meetings from my childhood. I can not recollect ever to have heard a sermon on baptism from a Baptist minister during the period of my youth. I had been an ordained Baptist minister half-a-dozen years when, for the first time in my life, I heard a Baptist minister preach on baptism. And within the field of my observation during the sixteen years of my ministry, it is indisputably true, that Pedobaptists have preached on baptism twice as often as Baptists. I would commend to Dr. FAIRCHILD, and to the Board which

endorses and publishes such statements, the commandment—‘Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.’”

Here is what another Baptist writes:

“We hear very little, comparatively, of the old-fashioned kind of preaching. We seem to forget that a new generation is rising up, and that the old truths are as essential for them to hear as the generation past. Our distinctive features are now handled so delicately by some, that their keen edge is blunted. On baptism and communion we have been denounced so much, that we have become sensitive, through fear of offending delicate ears, and seem to have lost our manliness. And hence we seldom hear a sermon on the great, distinguishing truths that made our fathers so successful, and gave us our prominence as a church. The doctrines of grace are so tenderly handled, and dressed up so fashionably—like sugar coated pills, lest they offend delicate stomachs—that, as an Episcopalian once said of sprinkling, it is hard enough to call them the Gospel any way! Thus, for fear of giving offence to men of *liberal views*, who have really no love for the Gospel at heart, we are afraid to speak out our opinions boldly, and keep in the background the doctrines which have told so wonderfully for good on the world.”

M. I don’t want any man to cloak his sentiments or sacrifice his independence for me. I want him to be frank and outspoken; and if he does give

rough and hard blows, I can respect him for his manliness, far more than the man who is afraid to speak his honest sentiments for fear of giving offence. I have little confidence in men who profess to ride neutral hobbies: their time is too much occupied in looking how to steer clear of the truth, *or in leaning over to one side*. Neutrality is a sorry nag to ride at best.

P. And yet most people generally like to hear a good gospel sermon — to hear an outspoken, fearless advocate; and the “trimmers”—like the minister who had one sermon that could be used either for a funeral or thanksgiving occasion, by merely changing a word here and there—sooner or later come to grief.

The secret of all this opposition, in addition to what I have said before, is — the Pedobaptists want the Baptists to preach less on baptism, because it troubles them very much to hear a full Gospel preached. If Peter were to stand up in some of our churches, and thunder out, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you,” they would cry out, “there, that Baptist is harping on baptism again!” Every time immersion is preached it rises up like an accusing spirit before a Pedobaptist, nor can he bid it “down!” It will be an unfortunate day in the world’s history, when the Baptists cease preaching a full Gospel.

Another thing, I suppose, you have against the Baptists, is their

CLOSE COMMUNION.

M. Yes; and right heartily do I oppose them for that. I admit you have had the best of the argument on baptism, but you will find it harder work to prove close communion right.

P. It is not strange that those who boast of changing Christ's ordinance of baptism, and disregard his example, should also seek to destroy the Bible rule on the Lord's Supper, and advocate open communion. The change of one necessarily demands the change of the other; so that consistency requires that, having substituted their own inventions for the divine rule of baptism, they should now change the apostolic example of communion.

M. It may appear strange to you, brother E., but *why can not all Christians commune together here, if they expect to commune together in heaven?* as our ministers say.

P. You forget that there is no Lord's Supper in heaven. From the way some of your preachers "thank God, there is no close communion in heaven," I suppose they expect to partake of the Supper there.

M. [Looking confused and ashamed.] You have me there again, I must confess.

P. I have been ashamed, time and time again, to hear Christians talk in this way — of communion in heaven. They are certainly very ignorant, or very unfair. Ignorant, in saying they expect to

partake of the Lord's Supper in heaven ; or unfair, in representing the Baptists as selfish and bigoted. Some of our members, whenever the subject of close communion is mentioned, raise their eyes in devout thankfulness, and with a fervent voice exclaim : " Thank God, there is no *close communion in heaven !*" Just as if they meant : " *Thank God, we will all eat the Lord's Supper together in heaven !*"

One Sabbath day a Pedobaptist minister told his delighted brethren the following dream : " Brethren, I thought I was in heaven, and wanted to see some of our Baptist friends, and I walked — and I walked — to find them, until I came to one corner fenced off, when, looking over, I spied them around the Lord's table."

" Thank God !" said a Baptist, on hearing of it ; " they were there any how ! But I am afraid our liberal Christian friend, unless he teaches the people more truth than that, will awake to find himself ' fenced ' out altogether !"

And this kind of currency is passed by and among our friends, without detecting its counterfeit character. It is the kind of logic we meet the Baptists with.

M. Well, brother E., can you tell me what the Lord's Supper was instituted for ?

P. *The Lord's Supper was instituted for the remembrance of Jesus.* Let us see what the Bible says about it. Turn to Matt. xxvi. 26–28 : " Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat, this is my body.

And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it. For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Now turn to 1st Cor. xi. 23-27, and see what Paul says: "Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you. *This do in remembrance of me.* This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, *in remembrance of me.* For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." Thus, you see, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that the Supper was instituted by Christ for a memorial of his death.

Again: If you will examine the apostolical example, you will see that the Lord's Supper was instituted for the church, partaken of only in a church capacity, and by baptized believers in union of doctrine and fellowship. Turn to the following passages: Acts ii. 41, 42—"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." Acts iv. 32—"And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul." Acts xx. 7—"And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread," etc. Here you have union of faith, doctrine and practice. They believed the Gospel, participated in its saving power and joyful experi-

ence, obeyed its requirements by being baptized, and then, in the church, commemorated the death of their divine Master. *Thus, the Lord's Supper was exclusively administered to baptized believers.*

The New Testament churches consisted wholly of baptized believers. As the Hon. BAPTIST W. NOEL says, in his "Essay on Christian Baptism," p. 8, "The converts were baptized at Philippi, (Acts xvi. 15, 33;) at Corinth, (Acts xviii. 8; 1 Cor. i. 13; xv. 29;) at Ephesus, (Acts xix. 5; Eph. iv. 5;) at Colosse, (Col. ii. 12;) and throughout Asia Minor, (1 Pet. iii. 21;) the disciples were also baptized at Rome, (Rom. vi. 3;) and *since there is no reason to suppose that the discipline of these churches differed from that of the other apostolic churches, we may infer that all the converts in those churches were similarly baptized.*" Peter said to believers on the day of Pentecost, "Be baptized every one of you," and they "were baptized." Acts ii. 38, 41; see also x. 48. So that the Baptist churches are, in this respect, "followers of the churches of God," as first founded by Christ and his Apostles. 1 Thess. ii. 14.

M. Well, grant all you say, was not the Lord's Supper instituted, also, for communion with each other, no difference to what church we belong?

P. No. The Lord's Supper, in addition to the foregoing, is for *communion with Christ*, and not to show our love for one another. Thus the Apostle says: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread

which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?"—1 Corinthians x. 16. And hence, in communion it is required that we *spiritually discern the Lord's body*, "for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation [condemnation] to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."—1 Cor. xi. 29. "For we being many are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread."—1 Cor. x. 17. "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him."—John vi: 56.

And again. The Lord's Supper symbolizes the blood of Christ as a seal of the new covenant, (Mark xiv. 24; Heb. viii. 9; ix. 16;) and is a pledge and a prophecy of eternal joys in heaven. Matt. xxvi. 29; 1 Cor. xi. 26.

The idea of assembling around the Lord's table in order to commune with, and to show our love for each other, is not the object for which the Lord's Supper was instituted. It is *communion with Christ*, and *not communion with Christians*. The Christian comes to the table as a child born of God; *and only as a child he is entitled to eat*. Thus the regenerated alone are privileged to commune. How can the unconverted eat this spiritual bread and drink this spiritual drink? A saving knowledge of Christ is not only a pre-requisite to baptism, but essentially necessary to communion.

"When our Lord's Supper was instituted, he intended it either for certain persons only, or for all

persons without distinction. If it was designed only for certain persons, of a particular qualification, then Christ, in the outset, established the practice of restricted communion. That he did this is certain, as may be seen in Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, eleventh chapter, where he says that Christ, on the night of his betrayal, set apart the bread and wine as a standing memorial of himself. And who were to be the participants of these symbols? Christ's true followers, and none others. Listen to his own words, in his matchless sermon of love, addressed to those to whom he administered the supper. He said, on the night of instituting the supper—'I go to prepare a place for you;' 'My peace I give unto you;' 'I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.' (John xiv. 2; and xv. 15.) These sayings can be applied only to his true, believing followers, and they indicate the wide difference between those for whom the supper was intended, and those not qualified to be its participants. To the former Christ restricted his commemorative ordinance.

"When he said, 'This do in remembrance of me'—(1 Cor. xi. 24)—he desired this precept to be obeyed only by those who have faith to discern his body as the sacrifice for sinners, and have love for him as their Saviour. None others could properly partake of his supper, for 'He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.'

The partaking of these emblems is a profession of faith in Christ as having died and risen for the communicant's salvation, and of union with him, and of life from him. Now, to profess all of this falsely, 'not discerning the Lord's body,' without true, Christian faith, is to incur condemnation, for to eat and drink thus is to practice a monstrous falsehood, which Christ never enjoined upon any individual. 'Do this in remembrance of me,' he required of only certain persons who could do it worthily; and, therefore, by restricting the supper to these, he instituted the practice of restricted communion."

M. But did not the Saviour admit Judas to communion.

P. Judas is a great favorite of open communions. I don't know what we should do without him. But "If Judas partook of the Lord's Supper, he did it in the character of a true disciple, the omniscient Saviour alone perceiving his hypocrisy. But it is probable, if not certain, that he went out to accomplish the betrayal of Christ before the supper was instituted."

But if it is so very important, as you say, to invite all to commune together, why did not the Saviour invite all the disciples to partake with him at the supper? Only twelve, if we include Judas, were with him then.

M. That does look a little restricted, I must confess. I can't answer your question.

P. Are you aware that the whole subject of communion turns on regeneration and baptism?

M. I suppose it must; but I am not positive. What say you?

P. That it is an admitted fact; and it is really only necessary to determine what is scriptural conversion and baptism. All other issues are foreign to the subject. Let me furnish you a few extracts from leading Pedobaptist writers touching this point:

MOSHEIM.—In speaking of the faithful and catechumens in the first century, MOSHEIM says: “The former were such as had been solemnly admitted into the church *by baptism*; and who might be present at all the parts of religious worship. The latter, not yet having received baptism, were not admitted to the sacred supper.”—Ecel. Hist., vol. i. p. 69. Of the third century he says: “Neither those doing penance, nor those *not yet baptized*, were allowed to be present at the celebration of this ordinance.”—Vol. i., p. 189.

NEANDER, speaking of the first three centuries, says: “At this celebration [the supper], as may be easily concluded, no one could be present who was not a member of the Christian Church, and incorporated into it *by the rite* of baptism.”—Vol. i., p. 327.

Dr. WALL, in his History of Infant Baptism, says: “No church ever gave the communion to any persons before they were baptized. Among all the

absurdities that ever were held, none ever maintained that any person should partake of the communion before they were baptized."

PETER KING, Lord High Chancellor of England, in his *Primitive Church*, p. 196, a work published by your [Methodist Episcopal] church, says: "Baptism was always precedent to the Lord's Supper, and none were admitted to receive the eucharist till they were baptized. This is so obvious to every man that it needs no proof: if any one doubts it, he may find it clearly asserted in the *Second Apology of Justin Martyr*, p. 97."

Dr. DODDRIDGE, in his *Miscellaneous Works*, p. 510, says: "It is certain that Christians in general have always been spoken of, by the most ancient fathers, as baptized persons. And it is also certain that, as far as our knowledge of primitive antiquity extends, no unbaptized person received the Lord's Supper."

Dr. DWIGHT says: "It is an indispensable qualification for this ordinance that the candidate for communion be a member of the visible church of Christ, in full standing. By this I intend that he should have made a public profession of religion, and that he should have been baptized."

THE AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY, in a tract entitled, "Shall I come to the Lord's Supper," thus lays down the duty of the pious inquirer: "Let him repent and believe, and come to the table of the Lord. All these are alike duties, and to neglect

either is to violate a divine command. But they are to be done in Gospel order. Repent and believe, and being baptized, commemorate the dying love of the Redeemer.—P. 12. It says again, (p. 3): “We have then arrived at the conclusion that all, without exception or limitation, all who repent and believe, and are baptized, *and only they*, are fit subjects for the Lord’s Supper.”

In a tract published by the CONGREGATIONAL BOARD OF PUBLICATION, entitled, “Scriptural Platform of Church Government,” when discussing “the materials of which a church is formed,” it is said, (p. 2): “As to the Gospel church, it is plain that it was composed of none but visible saints. No other but baptized persons were admitted to communion; and no adult persons but such as professed repentance and faith were admitted to baptism, which shows that they were visible saints.”

Dr. DICK (*Presbyterian*) says: “An *unbaptized person* should not be permitted to partake of the eucharist.”

Thus, from Bible and Pedobaptist testimony, regeneration and baptism are essentially pre-requisites to communion.

M. But the Pedobaptists believe they have been baptized.

P. But the Baptists deny it, and can not substitute the Pedobaptists belief for their own, nor give up principles to please men. “They might as well take Quakers to their fellowship, who reject both

ordinances. This would be assuming a dispensing power, and claiming authority which does not belong to them. Would the Apostles have received them? Would they have authorized the churches to receive unbaptized believers to fellowship? If not, what right have the Baptists to do that which the Apostles would have disallowed?"

M. You say, then, that the Baptists believe that conversion and baptism must precede communion, and that baptism only is immersion?

P. Certainly, if I understand them. They maintain that regeneration and baptism must precede communion. "All Christendom admits that baptism precedes communion. The admission of an unbaptized person to the Lord's Supper is contrary to the uniform practice of Christian churches. Justin Martyr, in the second century, declared its lawfulness. The same opinion has been held and maintained down to the present time." But now comes the difference between us. We believe in baptismal regeneration, and that pouring and sprinkling are baptism; and hence, we invite all to communion; and some of us do not even require these. The Baptists require spiritual regeneration, and maintain that immersion alone is baptism: and hence their invitation to the Lord's table is confined to such characters. They are governed exclusively by the apostolical example. Here is the gist of the whole matter — the cause of our difference.

Where is their illiberality and injustice? They

have the same right to believe that immersion is baptism as we have that sprinkling is baptism. They invite the baptized, and we invite those whom we call baptized. How can the Baptists do otherwise and be consistent? Thus, if we are resolved to oppose their close communion, we must attack them on baptism; for it is really CLOSE BAPTISM, and not close communion.

Said a prominent and intelligent man, who had been converted in a Baptist meeting:

“I would join the Baptist church to-day, Elder, if I could believe in your close communion.”

“Well,” replied the minister, “here is a little book on communion, won’t you take and read the Bible references in it?”

“I have no objection.”

So he took the book, read it, and examined the Bible carefully. A few days afterwards he went to see the minister again, his face beaming, and his heart so full that he at once exclaimed:

“Elder, I’m all right now. I see it’s close baptism, and not close communion. Now I am ready to be baptized and join the church, if you will only receive me.”

M. Close baptism! That’s something new to me, brother C. And yet it looks like it. It does seem, from what you have said, that only those who are born again and baptized have the right to come to the Lord’s table.

P. There is no doubt of it. And if we allow the

unregenerate and unbaptized to commune, we ought not to expect the Baptists to commune with us. They have as much right to say who are baptized, and to regulate their own affairs, as we have.

Besides, there are thousands in our churches who have neither been regenerated nor baptized. And, again, there are churches that believe in baptismal regeneration, deny the divinity and expiatory sacrifice of Christ, the new birth, and baptism, besides holding other unscriptural doctrines. With such views, how can they be invited to the Lord's table, notwithstanding their profession and relation?

M. I do not see how they can, with any degree of consistency.

P. In your church, I believe, "seekers" are invited to the Lord's Supper.

M. Yes; we invite them to the Lord's table as *a means of grace*. Our Discipline says:—"There is only one condition previously required of those who desire admission into these societies, '*a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins.*'" It is expected of all who continue in these societies, that they should *continue to evidence their desire of salvation*, by attending to all the ordinances of God: such are the public worship of God, the ministry of the Word, * * * and *the Supper of the Lord*."—
P. 31 and 32.

P. Thus, you admit the unregenerate and unbaptized to communion. Now, if there were no other reason, the practice of your church absolutely

excludes from your table all those who believe that none but the regenerate and baptized have the right to commune. *You make it close communion. You exclude the Baptists.* What does the boasting liberality of your ministers amount to? If I invite my neighbor to communion on terms which I know he can not comply with, I not only virtually close the door against him, but my invitation is a solemn mockery. *Thus, you see, we are the inventors of close communion.* We put up bars to the Lord's table. And yet we try to make the people believe we are very liberal.

M. We the inventors of close communion! [Scratching his head in apparent confusion.] We exclude the Baptists, and invite them to commune with the unregenerate and unbaptized! Unpleasant as it is, I must admit it. And yet we censure the Baptists because they wont invite the unconverted and unbaptized members of our societies to communion! How inconsistent we are.

P. There is no doubt of that. The idea of "close communion," as we apply it to the Baptists, would never have been thought of, if "open communion" had not been invented by Pedobaptists. Instead of being close communion, it is free to all who obey the divine requirement: it is the only communion authorized by the Bible. "Open communion," as practiced by us, is the worst kind of close communion; for, while it opens the door to the unconverted, and unbaptized, etc., it virtually

closes it against those who have obeyed the Scriptural requisition! Why can not people be more consistent, and call things by their right names! And yet, I don't know but what "open communion" is an appropriate name after all; for it is certainly *open to fundamental objections*, and so *loose*, that it well deserves the name of LOOSE COMMUNION.

What is your next objection to the Baptists?

M. That they do not recognize members of other churches as Christians.

P. That is a common objection with us, and never was there one more unjust and unchristian. It is a charge made by Rev. A. BARNES, and sung in varying changes by Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Methodists. Before I reply to it, let me relate an incident:

Some years ago the Rev. ALBERT BARNES, the founder of the New School Presbyterians, visited Peoria, Ill., before there was any New School Presbyterian church organized there. Some of the Old School Presbyterian members were very anxious to hear Mr. BARNES preach; but they could not consistently ask him to preach in their church, because the Old School body disfellowshipped or excommunicated the New School on account of false doctrines. So these Old School Presbyterians in Peoria went to the pastor of the Baptist church, and asked *him* to invite Mr. BARNES to preach in his church, so that they could come and hear him. The Baptist pastor, being anxious to hear Mr. BARNES, was very

glad to do so; so the invitation was given, and accepted.

M. The Baptists showed a more liberal and Christian spirit than the Old School Presbyterians.

P. Yes; and a kinder spirit than Mr. BARNES has since manifested, for he has published a very bitter and bigoted pamphlet against the Baptists, entitled "Exclusivism;" in answer to which a Baptist minister, Rev. J. WHEATON SMITH, D.D., of Philadelphia, has printed an eloquent reply, which has come into my hands since our investigations commenced. I will let the Baptist answer Mr. BARNES and yourself.

"But do we thus cast out our brethren?" [unchristianize them], says he. "Our denominational literature is before you; in which of our writings do you find it? Our churches abound in this community and around it—which of them holds it? Our ministers mingle freely with your own—which of them teaches or believes it? Our laymen are associated with yours, they live in the same streets, worship often at the same altars, strike hands in the same works of love—which of them treats his brother of a different denomination as an outcast from Christ? If such a man can be found, I would almost consent to give another Baptist to the whipping-post. If we have such a minister, let him hear the words which were rung in the ears of our first preacher at Haverhill, warning him '*off of God's earth!*' If we have one such church, nail up the

doors of its meeting-house, as the Pedobaptist authorities of New England nailed up the doors of our first meeting-house in Boston. But, sir, on this score at least, we should be safe from persecution. Born and bred among Baptists, I never met with one who entertained such views, or knew before that we were suspected of holding them."

M. Well, the Baptists ought to know best what they believe, and I am willing to give them the benefit of their denial. But, somehow, I don't feel yet altogether right about it.

P. I know it is hard to get the old leaven of opposition to the Baptists cast out of our hearts; but what has feeling to do with a question of principle? But let us hear the Baptists still further in their denial of unchristianizing other denominations. Says another:

"The charge is groundless and wicked. We have already shown why the Baptists do not commune with open communionists. We admit them to be Christians, but not a Christian church in Gospel order. We may extend to them the hand of Christian fellowship, but not the hand of church fellowship. This practice, if rightly understood, is not uncharitable. Some Pedobaptists will not commune with unbaptized persons, though they believe them Christians. In this we perfectly agree. We are even more liberal than they, because we will commune with all we baptize into the fellowship of the church, but they will not — they baptize multi-

tudes whom they never admit to the Lord's table. They are, therefore, closer than Baptists."

M. Well, I declare, brother E., that is completely turning the table on us. If you keep on this way, I rather think we shall find that it is our ox that has been goring the Baptists!

P. Yes, and that alters the case materially. But, "the Baptists, in declining to extend an invitation to the Lord's table, do not cast an imputation upon the Christian character of their brethren. Christian character is not the only pre-requisite to the Supper: the divine rule requires also scriptural baptism, and consistent church membership. The laws of this country, for example, do not admit the foreigner to the right of citizenship until he has passed through the legal process of naturalization, however pure may be his intentions, or eminent his virtues. This restriction, however, does not impeach his character; for the rights of the citizen are freely offered him, if he will pass through the preliminary process. Was the Jew uncharitable when, in accordance with the divine law, he invited none but the circumcised to the Passover? Even Enoch, Melchisedec, and Job, had they been present, could not have partaken, unless first circumcised. Was it a want of charity in Christ, when, at the institution of the Supper, he did not invite the 'above five hundred brethren,' nor Lazarus, nor the Marys, nor even his own mother? Certainly this was not an impeachment of their Christian character, but an

exact observance of the law of the ordinance; for they were not then, like the Apostles, united with Christ in the peculiar fellowship of a church."

Are you aware that "no member of a Baptist church can claim it as a *right* to commune with any other Baptist church?"

M. No. It is altogether new to me.

P. But so it is. They contend that "every church is an independent body; which fact forever settles the question, that intercommunion between the members of Baptist churches is based on *courtesy*, and not on *right*. If a church is independent, how can the members of another church interfere with its action? How can they claim any thing of it on the ground of right? A church would exemplify a rare independence, if those not belonging to it could rightfully demand seats in it at the table of the Lord. Every church, being independent, must act for itself; and is, therefore, as evidently bound to maintain the ordinances of Christ in their purity, as if there were no other church under heaven. Every Baptist feels that he is a sovereign citizen of the kingdom of Jesus Christ. Every Baptist church is a sovereign democracy, on which devolves the duty of executing the laws of Christ, and of preserving in their primitive purity and integrity the ordinances of the Gospel."

M. That is a high claim you are putting in for the Baptists. A democracy is well enough for the state, but for the church — I don't know about that.

P. Is not that because you have been trained to another way of thinking by your preachers? But to proceed. The Lord's Supper is a CHURCH ORDINANCE. A church of Jesus Christ has within itself the right to guard and maintain the purity of the ordinances; to require conformity to the Saviour's requisition and apostolical example. The latter is already seen from Acts ii. 41, 42. After preaching to the multitude, Peter cried out, "Repent and be converted," etc. "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized. * * * And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine, and in breaking of bread, and in prayer." Thus repentance and conversion preceded baptism, and baptism communion. This example completely condemns all contrary practices. The church has the right to say who have or have not obeyed the divine requirement. All churches say who shall or shall not commune. "When Christians are associated together in a church state, under a definite creed, communion in the sacraments involves an approbation of the principles of that creed; and that, as the church is invested with authority, which she is bound to exercise, to keep the ordinances pure and entire, sacramental communion is not to be extended to those who do not approve the principles of the particular church, or submit themselves to her authority." Such is the testimony of a Pedobaptist.

Here are two more extracts from Pedobaptists:

"The ruling officers of a particular congregation

have power authoritatively to suspend from the Lord's table a person not yet cast out of the church:

“*First.* Because those who have authority to judge of, and admit, such as are fit to receive the sacrament, have authority to keep back such as shall be found unworthy.

“*Second.* Because it is an ecclesiastical business of ordinary practice belonging to that congregation.”
—*Presbyterian Form of Church Government, Westminster Assembly.*

“By the constitution of the Congregational churches, no persons are admitted to the Lord's Supper, but such as have previously assented to the covenant of a particular church, and have assumed the responsibilities of such covenant. Without doubt every sincere follower of Christ has a right to participate in the Lord's Supper, nor can that right be justly overlooked. But, on the other hand, the right of judging of the marks of that sincerity rests with the particular church, and its members are bound to exercise it with caution and faithfulness,” etc.—*Upham on Constitution of Congregational Churches*, 233.

That the Apostle Paul exercised the right of directing the church in regard to the celebration of the Lord's Supper is evident from 1 Cor. v. 11; Phil. iii. 17; 2 Thess. iii. 6, 9. This authority the Apostle derives from his inspiration; and hence, apostolic example has the same binding force as a positive precept: thus churches are obligated to

keep the ordinances as received. 1 Cor. xi. 2; 23, 24; 2 Thess. ii. 15: 1 Cor. iv. 1 and 17; xiv. 37; xvi. 1: 2 Cor. xiii. 10.

Churches are called to exercise disciplinary powers over their members. Matt. xviii. 17: 1 Cor. v. 1-7; and vi. 4: 2 Cor. ii. 6-10. A church is superior to an individual, and has the right to enforce the Gospel ordinances as it understands them. And thus, churches are the guardians of order and ordinances of the Gospel.

Besides, ministers have a personal responsibility. Matt. xviii. 19: Acts viii. 37; x. 47, 48. A minister violates his commission by administering ordinances to those he thinks unqualified. He must be the judge of qualification; and require baptism before the Lord's Supper.

No one has the right to demand communion of any church in violation of its doctrines and rules of church order. It is manifestly unjust for an individual holding doctrines and practices opposed to a church, to ask for communion in that church. Is he to override its rules and order, and demand of those who believe baptism a pre-requisite to communion, to admit the unbaptized to the Lord's table? Has not the church and administrator a *conscience* in this matter as well as the applicant? If a church has not the right to guard the Lord's table, then all, indiscriminately, have the right to communion, whether Catholic or Presbyterian, Congregationalist or Unitarian, Methodist or Universalist, Baptist or

Quaker. If a church has the *right* to reject *one*, it has the right to reject *more*. And if it rejects but *one*, it is a *close communion church*.

There is one thing more I wish to mention in connection here. Open communion *subverts all church order*, and *destroys the effect of church discipline*. For instance, you disfellowship a member of your church for heresy, or disobedience to the order of your church polity: afterwards, he joins another church, yet still retaining the same opinions and practices for which he was excommunicated. Then, at your communion season, on an invitation given to members in good standing in your sister churches, he comes and partakes with you at the Lord's Supper; and you can not help yourselves. I have heard of such cases. I need not ask, how much love and Christian fellowship there is in that? nor what your feelings would be, were you to kneel by his side?

M. That may all be true; but still I should like to know why, as individuals, we have not the right to judge of the terms of communion ourselves? If I am sincere, and satisfied in my own mind that I ought to go to the Lord's table in any church, who has the right to prevent me? If an individual has not the right to determine the terms of communion, pray who has? Does not the Baptist's argument destroy a man's liberty of conscience?

P. You forget yourself, my friend. Did you not say in the opening of our Conversations that sincerity

never made a truth, nor justified a man in believing an error?

M. Yes; but that referred to baptism.

P. Can sincerity make a wrong right in communion, and not in baptism? "The apology offered for those in error, 'that they are *sincere*,' is a flimsy concern. If I pass spurious money to you, both of us thinking sincerely that it is genuine, does our sincerity *make* it genuine? If we know it to be spurious, shall we pass it to others, and encourage them to keep it in circulation, because they are sincere in their estimate of it? To trifle with—to abuse thus the sincerity of others, would not make the coin good, but would bring upon ourselves a merited penalty. Are you willing to apologize for the bloody crimes of Saul, because he was sincere in murdering Christians? Will not the sincerity that justifies an error in baptism also justify the errors of Roman Catholics and Mahommedans? Away with this substitution of sincerity for right, for Scripture! If it is good for any thing—if it can make wrong right, then the sincere Pagans are rivals of Christians. It is worse than folly to say that because one who has been sprinkled or signed with the cross thinks he is baptized, therefore he is baptized. Apply such reasoning as this to the common affairs of life, and error, assuming the dignity of truth, would produce the most disastrous results. To avoid such a state of things, we are strictly taught to adhere solely to the Scriptures, and not to

receive for doctrines the teachings of mere men. 'To the law and to the testimony.'"

M. Well, then, to the law and to the testimony. Does not the Bible say, "Let a man examine himself?"

P. No man has the liberty of changing the Bible law governing the Lord's Supper. But you do not quote the passage fairly, and give its connection. It is a garbled extract. But let us look at it. Why is a man to examine himself? Certainly not to determine the law or the terms of the Supper; that belongs to Christ, and those terms he has revealed in his Word, clearly and explicitly. Here is the apostolic precedent and example: "Then they that *gladly received* His word were *baptized*; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they *continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship*, and in BREAKING OF BREAD, and in *prayers*."—Acts ii. 41, 42. It is the duty of a man to examine his own *heart*—to see whether he is a child of God, and to be satisfied that he "discerns the *Lord's body*" in the elements of the Supper, having conformed to the requirements of the Bible as a Christian, so that he eat and drink not "unworthily;" for "whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord."—1 Cor. xi. 27.

And thus, to avoid this fearful result, the Apostle gives this serious caution: "But let a man examine

himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup; for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation [condemnation] to himself, *not discerning the Lord's body.*"—1 Cor. xi. 28, 29:—This condemnation being exclusively the result of the individual failing to discern the body and blood of Christ in the Supper.

This, therefore, we repeat, is what a man has to do before coming to the Lord's table: to see whether he has conformed to the requirements of God's word as a Christian, and thus, in eating, be enabled spiritually to *discern the Lord's body*, and *not to make for himself terms of admission to the Lord's Supper.*

Those drink unworthily who have not complied with the scriptural requisition; who, not being born again, can not discern the Lord's body, and enter into communion with the body and blood of Christ; for "he that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood," says Jesus, "dwelleth in me, and I in him."

And now, as it is late, let us defer further investigation until to-morrow evening, for there is much yet to be said in our examination of the Baptists.

M. Such being the case, we had better do so; but I hardly know how to wait with patience.



FOURTEENTH CONVERSATION,

The Baptists Examined—(Continued.)



IN introducing the evening's Conversation Mr. E. said:

“Are you aware, brother C., what we require of the Baptists in demanding open communion?”

METHODIST. I am not aware that we ask of them more than we do of others.

PRESBYTERIAN. Yes, far more. Said a Baptist to an open communionist: “You ask me to do what you would not do yourself if you were in my place.”

“How so?” inquired the Free Will.

“You believe that the baptized only have the right to commune.”

“Certainly I do.”

“So do I. And yet you ask me to invite the unbaptized to the Lord's table, which I should do,

according to your own definition of baptism, if I were to give a general invitation to communion. Thus you are offended at me because I will not ask you to do that which I would not do if I were in your place, and which you would not do if you were in my place."

M. Can any one, believing that baptism is necessary to communion, and that nothing is baptism but immersion, be so inconsistent as that?

P. Yes, some are just so inconsistent. Holding that baptism is a pre-requisite to the Lord's Supper, and that nothing is baptism but immersion, yet they invite what the Greek Church calls sprinkled Christians to the Lord's table; thus saying to the world that the unbaptized have the right to partake of the Supper, and that baptism is not essential to communion.

What we Pedobaptists ask of the Baptists is, to admit unregenerate and unbaptized persons to the Lord's table, and to acknowledge as scriptural our sprinkling. The fact is, and we may as well own it, *their restricted communion always denies and proclaims against the validity of our sprinkling.*

M. I see it now. And that may be one reason why some of our ministers seem so anxious to destroy it.

P. I have no doubt of it. If we can induce the Baptists to admit us to the Lord's table, we carry our point; and get them to acknowledge our sprinkling as baptism, even infant sprinkling, which they

believe to be a pernicious institution; and thus to abandon the doctrine that immersion is exclusively baptism.

M. And if they come and commune with us it amounts to the same thing. It is a master-stroke of policy. But now, I can not see how a Baptist can be consistent and commune with us. We ought not to expect it.

P. Of course not. It is an insult to ask them to do that to which they are conscientiously opposed. We should be very indignant if a Baptist were to ask us to violate our articles of faith and belief of the truth. And yet we ask all this of the Baptists, when we invite them to commune with Pedobaptists. We may be sincere, but we are very inconsistent. We persist in our endeavors to thrust ourselves into the family, regardless of all family regulations. We try to excite the public prejudice against them by our repeated invitations, when we know that their principles will not allow them to commune with us. I will not say that there was any intention of wrong, but I have known cases where Baptists attending Pedobaptist meetings have been particularly invited to the Lord's Supper as "our Baptist brethren." Where is our Christian courtesy? We denounce them in terms which ought to make us blush: "You're bigoted and intolerant," cries one: "You're ignorant and selfish," says another: "You think yourselves better than other Christians," cries the third: "You are

an unbaptized people, and yet think more of baptism than Christ and his Apostles did," writes a fourth: and, "You're an impolite and uncourteous sect," cries a fifth. And then, after all this abuse, we say: "Come, dear Baptist brethren, this close communion is all wrong: please admit us to your table."

I saw a printed letter from one who professes to be a liberal Christian, in which he boasted that he communed without invitation in a Baptist church, knowing at the same time that he was an intruder. There is Christian courtesy and union! There's a fine specimen of a high-toned Christian gentleman of liberal views, who boasts of his superiority to the Baptists!

M. That is equal to the man you mentioned who published a pamphlet on *Christian Unity*, in which he declared the Baptists to be the greatest bigots in Christendom.

P. Here is another specimen of liberal Christianity by a Presbyterian, taken from that gem of a little book published by the Presbyterians, "Bible Baptism." In answer to the question, "If persons that have been immersed are not baptized with a Bible baptism [Baptists], ought we to allow them to come with us to the communion table?" he replies, "By all means, * * * for they really think that they have been baptized. It would be very uncharitable and cruel to treat them as unbaptized. * * * They by no means intend to reject

baptism. Indeed, they think a great deal too much of it, a great deal more than Christ and the Apostles did. * * * As they are honest in their views, no doubt Christ accepts their baptism as real, and we ought to do the same." In another place he tells us that immersion is a "sectarian baptism," and here he tells us that the Baptists are not baptized with a Bible baptism, although they think they are — poor, deluded people, thinking more of baptism than Christ and the Apostles did; but because they are honest and sincere in their ignorance, not knowing any better, having not yet been brought into Presbyterian light and liberty, therefore he would invite them to the Presbyterian table. He insults them, and then condescendingly invites them to commune with him, a liberal minded, Bible baptized Presbyterian. And then he tells us that "no doubt Christ accepts their baptism as real."

M. If it's not Bible baptism, it is no baptism. Who gave him authority to speak for Jesus in this matter? — to say that he accepts a fiction as a truth?

P. It is an assumption of his own. It is an insult to the Saviour to say that he accepts a sectarian and unscriptural baptism as the thing which he required — as real. But not satisfied with this, the writer gives another "fling" at the Baptists. He says: "Rejoice, my young friend, in the thought that you belong to a church, which, in spreading the table of the Lord, can invite to it all professing

Christians, whatever may be the form of their baptism."

M. He can't be serious. "All professing Christians." Why, the Presbyterians don't invite "*all professing Christians*." Besides, they won't allow their own "*young Christians*" to come to their table until the ruling elders see proper. He can not be posted up in his own Confession of Faith. But I will give him credit for a larger charity for the ignorant Baptists than for his own young Christians.

P. Here is another specimen of "liberal Christianity," which I cut from a *union* paper:

"The rite of baptism needs to be understood in Episcopal and in Baptist branches of the church. He who makes it a saving ordinance, yea, a regenerative one, must go to Rome, where such things are believed, and not stay in Protestantism, that counts every man a member of Christ who has put on Christ. This ordinance needs no degradation, but it must be taught that he who builds up a Baptist church over against the Church of Christ, belongs to Rome. Close communion must yield, and the exclusive titleship to favoritism with Jesus must give way. These things will lead to schism. Already we hear of a large number of leading Baptist divines that are convinced that the time has come to *move*. The best method is the only thing to fix upon."

In this extract the writer makes three distinct charges against the Baptists, every one of which is

an unmitigated slander: 1st. He charges the Baptists with making baptism a saving ordinance. 2nd. He charges them with building up a Baptist church over against the Church of Christ, and that they belong to Rome. 3rd. He charges them with claiming exclusive titheship to favoritism with Jesus. And yet the author boasts of liberal views, and professes to be governed by an enlarged charity—the advocate of a theory far higher and broader than the Baptists. And “these things will lead to schism,” says he; no doubt rejoicing at the prospect while his pen was writing about *Christian union!*

M. I suppose the “wish was father to the thought.” I pity the “leading Baptist divines” who can not see through that flimsy web.

P. I will give you another incident, related to me by a Baptist minister:

“In a certain town in Illinois a Congregational deacon had an only daughter, who had been converted in the Baptist meeting, and desired to unite with the Baptist church. Her father so strongly opposed her wishes that he told her he would rather follow her to her grave, than see her unite with the Baptists. He told one of the Baptist members also that he had said this to his daughter, and the Baptist had informed me of it. In less than a month after this the deacon was present at our communion season. When I was about to commence the administration of the ordinance, he arose and

announced his intention of communing with us that day, if there was no objection.

“I remarked to the congregation that it was well known that this was the Lord’s ordinance and the Lord’s table, and not ours. If it were ours we could make such regulations as we chose; but as it was the Lord’s, and not ours, we felt bound to follow his directions, and we could invite only those whom Jesus had authorized us to invite. The Bible made three things prerequisite to a proper participation in the Lords’ Supper:

“1st. The communicant should be converted, regenerated, else he could not spiritually discern the Lord’s body.

“2nd. He should be baptized, by which, of course, we meant immersed; as we did not regard sprinkling or pouring to be baptism at all.

“3rd. He should be in fellowship with the church where he communes; for if he has been converted and we baptize him ourselves, yet, if from misconduct or false doctrine the church has disfellowshipped or excommunicated him, or if he holds doctrines for which we should disfellowship him, he is not a proper communicant, and we can not invite him.

“We can extend the invitation only to those who possess these three pre-requisites: conversion, baptism, and church fellowship in this church, or one of like faith and order. *If any one choose to partake without an invitation, he can take the responsibility — we shall not hinder him.*

“The Congregational deacon communed with us, seemingly intensely mortified that he had been caught in his own trap. Instead of provoking us to forbid his participation, he found we did not hinder him at all; but let him take the responsibility, after a clear exhibition of the fact that we regarded him as violating the law of Christ. How much love did he wish to show to the Baptists by communing with them?

“I baptized his daughter soon after.”

M. There is another objection, brother E., that our friends urge very much against the Baptists, which I should like you to answer. *The table is the Lord's*, say they, and why should not all the Lord's people be permitted to come to it?

P. Yes, that is a common objection, but a very poor one at best. I know it is the Lord's table: he is the proprietor of it, for he instituted the Supper. That is the reason why the Baptists guard it. If it were their table, they might, like us, invite the unregenerate and unbaptized to communion. But they can not do this.

The Lord's table was instituted for baptized believers. No others have the right to come to it. It must be approached in the Gospel way. “Over it the Baptists have no discretionary authority; and they place no obstructions in the way of approach. The Lord of the table himself has fenced it round. He has set it in the church, and to get into the church to partake of the Supper, we must be re-

generated and baptized." So that the objection, instead of applying to Baptists, is virtually made against the Saviour. The fact is, we think more highly of, and guard more carefully, our human institutions, than we do the ordinances of Christ.

M. That's a sweeping declaration, brother E. How so? Surely you must be mistaken.

P. No, I am not. We say, you must believe and do certain things, before you can join our churches, and then we say, virtually, you may believe and practice what you please, it is no difference, come to the Lord's table. Your church says, or did say, you may come to our love-feasts and class-meetings twice or thrice, but if you will not join us then, you can come no more: yet, say your ministers, you may come to the Lord's table as often as you please. Thus virtually saying you esteem the institutions of men of more importance than the ordinance of Christ. Thus we depreciate the ordinances of Jesus, and elevate above them the inventions of men!

M. Well, but our class-meetings and love-feasts are only *prudential means of grace*.

P. Prudential! Does it require less prudence in guarding the Lord's table? But let us return to the first objection. "We have no record of any person 'breaking bread' in the Pentecostal church who had not 'gladly received' the Word, and been baptized. And this is all that Baptist churches require now. They have raised no bar to communion; they

can throw none down. They do not refuse to receive any disciple who is willing to enter on the same footing as those already incorporated in the body of Christ."

Restricted communion guards the Lord's table against all unlawful approaches, proclaiming the absolute necessity of regeneration and baptism; but open communion breaks down all barriers, and virtually repudiates the necessity both of regeneration and baptism as requisites for the Lord's table!

M. I begin to feel ashamed of myself for not knowing better. And yet it seems unfriendly-like not to commune with each other. "*Close communion*," said a minister, "*separates dear friends*."

P. Who shows the greatest friendship for the Saviour? He who keeps, or he who breaks his commandments? On the same process of reasoning, we may demand the destruction of the Pedobaptist churches, because by them families are divided. Suppose a Baptist should contend that the Presbyterian church ought to be destroyed, because HIS family has been divided by some of his children becoming Presbyterians! Would not his demand be as pertinent—as wise—as the reason urged above against restricted communion? "I am come to set a man at variance against his father," are the words of the Saviour. Why not demand the destruction of the religion of Christ? It separates dear friends!

"Ye are my friends," said Jesus, "If ye do what-

soever I command you." To violate a commandment of his, for the sake of relationship or friendship, is to prove ourselves not worthy of him. "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me is not worthy of me. Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."—Matt. x. 33—38. Thus has the claim of Christ precedence of every other claim; and he who wilfully disobeys his Lord's holy requirements to prove how devotedly he loves another, exhibits his friendship in no desirable light and beauty.





FIFTEENTH CONVERSATION.

The Baptists Examined—(Continued.)



IS not communion at the Lord's table, as some say, a test of CHRISTIAN UNION? And is not close communion a barrier to it? inquired brother C.

P. I will let a distinguished Baptist reply to this. It is an extract taken from Dr. ARMITAGE'S speech on "Christian Union, Real and Unreal:—"

"Our Saviour did not intend it to be a test of Christian union, so far as we find any thing in the Bible. No Christian denomination so holds it, so far as they set forth their views upon the matter in their best expositors or authorized standards. It is never so used in their articles of faith, catechisms, or creeds. Intelligent and honest men never so use it in defining the import of the Supper. All Pedobaptists, when in controversy with Romanists, put a different interpretation from this upon the design of the Lord's Supper, but when it becomes desirable to dress down the Baptists by stigmatizing them as 'exclusive,' and 'bigots,' they call the Supper a

test of union. Is this honorable among gentlemen, to say nothing of Christians and ambassadors of Christ? Why give an interpretation to the Lord's Supper, when an appeal can be based upon the ignorance or prejudices of men, to the injury of Baptists, which is never put upon it under any other circumstance? The fact is, the Bible defines the object of the Supper to be specific. It was instituted for one thing, and for one thing only. What was that? To 'show forth' your love for one another? Did Christ say that? No, sirs. To 'show forth' your Christian union? No, sirs. Neither did Christ say that. To 'show forth' Christ himself, as the Son of God — born in the manger — healing in the Temple — agonizing in the Garden? No, sirs; not even that. To 'show forth' Christ, truly, but only in one act of his mediation, as Paul expresses it: 'TO SHOW FORTH HIS DEATH.' This, and only this. No more and no less. And our Pedobaptist brethren never give it any other interpretation, except when, in an unhappy moment, they stand behind the cross of Christ to make their Baptist brethren appear unmitigated bigots. Is not this true? I appeal to my candid and honorable brethren of various denominations now present to say if this is not true.

"Now, then, take another view of the matter. Take the facts of the Last Supper as Jesus himself administered it. Let me ask you, did John show his Christian union with Judas Iscariot when they

took the sop together from the same divine hand? Certainly, if ever, that should have been the time. Did the male portion of the discipleship show their Christian unity with the mother of Jesus, and with his other female followers, when they celebrated the supper alone? Did Jesus intend that they should? But if the Supper is a mark of Christian union, why were those holy women not present to celebrate it, seeing that the discipleship was emphatically one? Our Lord's prayer for union was offered *after* the Supper was administered. Therefore he prayed for a oneness among his disciples that the Supper did not, and could not, supply. The fact is, that the Lord's Supper is practically made of more importance in these days than other institutions of our Lord. Our Lord evidently intended that in Gospel churches the Lord's Supper should be of no more importance than the Lord's baptism. If one is a naked form, the other is a naked form: if one is a saving vitality, the other is a saving vitality; if one is a means of divine grace, the other is a means of divine grace; and if one is but a symbolical act, the other is but a symbolical act. If one is a putting on of Christ, the other is a showing forth of his death when he is put on. Then what end for the truth, or the glory of God, can be secured by the foisting in of some mystical sense in the interpretation of the one, which you exclude from the other? Why do you treat the one as if it were of the most solemn import imaginable, and the other as if it were the

emptiest form possible? Both of them are Christ's ordinances, enjoined upon his people; they are equally hallowed and binding, and neither of them is intended as a test of Christian union. And it seems to me that our Pedobaptist brethren are well satisfied of this themselves. Hence, none of them are really open communion."

M. Are you not aware, brother E., that there is now a great cry for "union" in certain quarters?

P. Yes, I am aware of it; and I have watched, with considerable interest, some of the union movements; and seen some very strange things connected with them. The American Sunday School Union publishes and sells books in which Pedobaptist views are distinctly set forth.

M. I thought the American Sunday School Union was strictly neutral, on the subject of baptism.

P. That is what it purports to be. But let me give you some extracts from a work, entitled, "The Way of Life," written by Dr. HODGE, a Presbyterian, of Princeton, and published by the Union: "The Bible teaches us that the sacraments are the signs of spiritual blessings."—P. 259. "We should greatly err, however, if we supposed they were merely signs. We are taught that they are *seals*; that they were appointed by Christ to certify to believers their interest in the blessings of the covenant of grace. Among men a seal is used for the purpose of authentication and confirmation."—

P. 262. "The Gospel is represented under the form of a covenant. It is so called by Christ himself. * * The sacraments are the seals of this covenant."—Pp. 263–4. "Again, as the sacraments are the seals of the covenant of grace, to reject these seals is to reject the covenant itself."—P. 278.

Here you have Pedobaptism condensed into a small compass — assertions which every Baptist denies.

Here is a quotation from another book, "Isa Greame's World," p. 21: "If there is hope for any one, he was sure there must be for him; for was he not of the seed of the faithful, the child of innumerable prayers? Had he not sat, a very Timothy, at the feet of his pious mother and grandmother? And the *seal* of the covenant, if there was any thing in that, had it not rested upon every Greame from generation to generation?"

M. I see, the same idea of sealing the children, by baptism, over to Christ.

P. Here is another specimen, quoted from "Proverbs Illustrated," a work purchased at the Union's rooms in Philadelphia: "And so, just as daylight was breaking over the eastern sky, the *little wailing infant was baptized into the Church of Christ.*"

M. "Baptized into the Church of Christ;" out of which the Presbyterian Confession of Faith says there is no ordinary possibility of salvation. Really, I must ask the same question you asked me: "What

is to become of the unbaptized, unsealed children, who are out of the Church of Christ?"

P. You must answer that. Besides the above, the Sunday School Union sells pictures representing Jesus standing in the water of the Jordan, nearly up to his knees, while John is standing on the shore pouring water on his head from a sea-shell in his right hand, while in his left he holds a cross. Let me get you the picture. I bought a package from which it is taken for our Sunday school. Here it is — look at it.

M. That is equal to the one where Philip is pouring water on the Eunuch from a clam-shell!

P. I could give you several more illustrations from the Union's works, but these are sufficient to prove what I have stated, that the American Sunday School Union, purporting to be an unsectarian publishing house, deriving its support from Baptists as well as Pedobaptists, is employed in circulating works advocating Pedobaptist principles: and yet, it "only proposes to disseminate those truths in which all evangelical Christians can unite!"

M. I am surprised that a Society professedly union should publish such things.

P. And I am more surprised that Baptists should give aid and support to their enemies by patronizing such an institution.

This cry of "*union!* UNION!" always reminds me of an anecdote I once heard:

ⓘ A certain Pedobaptist minister, preaching on the

observance of the Sabbath, said it was very wrong for young people to keep company on Sabbath evenings. After meeting, mounting his horse, he turned to a young man by his side, and said :

“Come, John, let us go down to Deacon Smith’s and see the girls.”

“Why,” replied John, in surprise, “did you not tell us it was wrong to keep company with the girls on Sunday evenings!”

“Psha!” replied the preacher: “I only said that that we might have a better chance!”

Whenever you hear a man blowing hard for union, be sure he is doing it that he may have a better chance at Deacon Smith’s!

M. And so with those who are always charging others with proselyting.

P. Such union is like that which the Baptist deacon wanted. Two old Baptist deacons had quarelled. One relented and said to the other: “Brother, this is all wrong; we ought to be reconciled; therefore, I do insist upon it, that you shall be reconciled, for I can not!”

Christian union, so called, is a union in which men agree to disagree; and to give the go-by to certain truths, however vital those truths may be.

M. There is a great deal of truth in what you say about union. I remember a union meeting in which the Baptists participated. At the close, our friends resolved to have a union communion; and,

because the Baptists could not join with them, they were denounced as bigots.

P. That was unkind, ungenerous, and cruel, They knew the Baptists could not join with them before they resolved on their communion. The Baptists are almost sure to get a slap in the face in these union meetings.

M. Some of our friends seem to enjoy "slapping" the Baptists. It was a luxury to me once.

P. But here is a good thing, where the "slap" was returned with interest:

One day a Baptist of Minnesota was in the company of some Methodist ministers, when close communion was introduced. One of the company said to the Baptist: "I should like you Baptists pretty well, if it were not for your close communion." To which the Baptist, turning to the others, replied, by relating the following incident: "A Baptist missionary was riding over our Northern prairies, and it was so excessively cold and stormy that he had to drive up to a house and ask to stay over night. The owner, well known to the missionary, listened to the request, and then, without a word, went in and closed the door in his face, leaving him out in the storm. The missionary was so completely chilled that he had to go under a shed, and jump and walk about to warm himself. All of which must have been known to the inhospitable owner." "Shame! shame!" cried all the listeners but one. "Well, gentlemen," that mis-

sionary was your speaker; and the man who closed the door in his face was the one who has just denounced our close communion."

M. I should have felt like crawling into some very small place, if I'd been him.

P. Here is another incident that shows how *will-ing* some of us are for union. A backslider, who had joined the church two or three times previously to this, had a wife, a devoted Christian, and a member of a Baptist church. He wanted to join the church again, and asked her to unite with him. She hesitated. "Well," said he at last, "if I lose my soul, I shall have to blame you for it!"

M. That was shameful, if he did want to join our church. I have no faith in such union. And when a husband asks his wife to sacrifice her principles, and leave the church of her choice, merely for his own accommodation, he shows himself not much of a man after all, and pays her a poor compliment, and the church she joins does not gain much by it. Let a man join a church on principle, and then he is likely to be firm, useful and respected. If he conscientiously wants to change his church relationship, let him—it's his privilege; and I won't throw a stick in his way, nor club him afterwards, as some do!

[Brother C. was certainly at the effervescing point.]

P. The truth is, we make the subject of communion a matter of **FEELING**, instead of **PRINCIPLE**.

To accommodate our feelings, we require the Baptist to sacrifice his principles — to join our churches. A. and B. were members of Pedobaptist churches, and had never communed together. A. had been brought to see his error, and told B. of his resolution to join the Baptists. B. remonstrated, cried bitterly about it; and, as a last resort, said: “Well, if you join the Baptists you will prevent me communing with you; and if you can’t commune with me here, how can you expect to commune with me in heaven!” To which A. replied: “I love you, and am sorry to grieve you. But shall I disobey a clear conviction of duty, and not follow my Saviour? Much as I esteem you, I can not do it. He has said, ‘He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me.’ He tells me to be baptized; and I believe that immersion only is baptism. For me to join your church is to say that sprinkling is baptism; and to commune with your church, is to acknowledge that you have all been baptized. Thus you ask me to deny my Saviour, and violate my convictions of the truth. But the way to communion is much easier for you.”

“How so?” inquired B.

“Follow your Saviour and the apostolic example. You say it is indifferent how a person is baptized. Why not then give up what is a matter of indifference? You have no conscience to compromise — be immersed; you believe it baptism. The advantage is on your side.”

We are just like the Universalist on this matter of *feeling*. "I can't *feel* that future punishment is true," says he. "I can't *feel* like letting my friends be punished hereafter; and I won't have it." And the Universalist is as consistent as the Congregationalist.

Thus you see we require the Baptist to sacrifice all for our accommodation; but we, though boasting of liberality and union, won't yield a jot to accommodate him. If we are so anxious to have union of communion, here is the Apostolic platform on which we can all unite:

"ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM."

M. That is a very good platform, I must confess. Only three planks in it.

P. And broad enough and strong enough to accommodate the whole world; divinely fitted together, with *no slabs of man's invention between*. But you say close communion separates dear friends. Let us look at it in another way. How many times have you communed with the Presbyterians and Congregationalists?

M. Let me see. [Thinks awhile.] Not once. Somehow it was never convenient for me to do so. How many times have you communed with us?

P. Just as often as you have with us, and for the same reason. There are many of us who never find it convenient to commune with the Methodists.

[Here the two friends could not help smiling at their position.]

Well [continued Mr. E.] if it is such a “precious privilege” to commune with others, why don’t you improve it? I shrewdly guess if the Baptists had unrestricted communion, we should be found as often communing with them as we do with each other—that we make the objection for other reasons.

Thus, you see, all your talk about its being such a “dear privilege,” and the illiberality of the Baptists, amounts to nothing. We do not commune with each other. Besides, we exclude many of the members of our own churches from the Lord’s table. Some of us baptize them into the church, and “teach that baptism is necessary, and that grace is thereby offered, and that children are to be baptized, who are by such baptism dedicated to God, and *made pleasing to him.*” [Augsburg Confession, art. ix.] Others call the baptized “*young Christians;*” and some say baptism is *putting the child’s name into the Gospel grant*; others say the children of Christian parents are born into the church; while still others say baptism washes away original sin, and *makes the children holy!* And yet they are not allowed to commune until these churches see proper. The Baptists commune with all they baptize into their fellowship; but we baptize them into our churches, and then bar them from the Lord’s table, *after making them the Lord’s children!* Does it not

require as much intelligence to comprehend the nature of baptism as it does the Lord's Supper?

M. That argument, brother E., destroys infant baptism! Certainly, if they can not comprehend the one, they can not the other. And if they are kept from the Lord's table because they can not *understand* it, they ought not to be baptized for the *same reason*.

P. Your reasoning is unanswerable. Certainly they ought not. And if the children are to be baptized, why should they not come to the Lord's table? They saw the necessity of this who first invented infant baptism; and hence the baptized children partook of the Supper, though some had to be fed with a spoon. Why don't our friends follow this example? and after baptizing the children to wash away their sins, bring them to the Lord's table — even if they have to be fed with a spoon!

But to continue. "It is a singular fact," says a writer, "that after all that has been said and written by Pedobaptists in favor of open communion; though it has been referred to as the great *desideratum* of Christendom, there is to-day no such thing as open communion among Pedobaptist themselves. Presbyterians and Methodists will commune together, and denounce each other's Calvinism and Arminianism the next day, if not the next hour. Not many years have passed away since the Old School General Assembly of Presbyterians declined an invitation to commune with the New School

General Assembly, both being in session at the same time.

The Old School Presbyterian Synod of Missouri met at Booneville, and after several days of angry disputation, it was rent asunder, and on Sabbath the two separate organizations met at the same hour in different places to partake of the Lord's Supper. Episcopalians will not go and commune with the Methodists and Presbyterians. The United General Presbyterian Church, composed of the Associate Reformed and Seceders, and the Reformed Presbyterian Church, have close communion. The position of the latter is thus stated by one of its ministers:

“As the church is invested with authority which she is bound to exercise, to keep the ordinances pure and entire, sacramental communion is not to be extended to those who do not approve the principles of the particular church, or submit themselves to her authority. * * * She does not feel at liberty to allow every man to be the judge of his own qualifications for sealing ordinances, to dispense these ordinances to such as do not assent to her religious principles, or whom she could not subject to her discipline were they found violating their Christian obligations.”

Why do you denounce the Baptists so much, and not these?

M. I was not aware that close communion was practiced so extensively by Pedobaptist churches.

P. No, I suppose not. And why should there be such a united opposition to the restricted communion of the Baptists, and nothing said about the close communion of Pedobaptist churches? Both believe baptism necessary to communion. Here is a key to unlock the mystery: the restricted communion of the Baptists, as previously stated, *protests against the validity of pouring and sprinkling*, and charges the Pedobaptists with substituting these for the primitive baptism. It applies the ax to the root of the tree planted in the soil of human expediency. This appears to me the rock of offence.

Let us look a little farther. On May 2nd, 1648, the Presbyterians, having the ascendancy in the British Parliament, “passed a law against heretics, which is hardly to be paralleled among Protestants. One of the errors specified was the holding that the baptism of infants is unlawful and void, and that such person ought to be baptized again. The person implicated was, on confession, to ‘renounce it in the public congregation;’ or, ‘in case of refusal, be committed to prison till he find sureties that he shall not publish the said error or errors any more.’” —*Neal’s Hist. of the Puritans*, part iii. ch. 10.

M. That certainly was a very intolerant law. I wonder what our Presbyterian friends think of it now?

P. There was close communion for the poor Baptist in prison with his God, but a poor chance for open communion with his Presbyterian *brethren*.

Nor was there, on the part of Congregationalists, in New England, a desire to commune with Baptists, when, in the early settlement of the country, they fined, scourged, imprisoned, and banished them. The Braintree church debarred their sister, Hannah Linfield, from communion, for being re-baptized, which implied that infant baptism was a nullity, and that so the church were unbaptized. And Solomon Paine, a Congregationalist minister, wrote an article, the sum of which was, "That if any godly people, who do not hold infant baptism, confessed that it might be their darkness that they did not hold it, he would commune with them; but he could not commune with those who said it was their *light*, and not their darkness, which made them reject infant baptism."

M. Why, that beats any thing I have heard on our side of the question. Why are the Congregationalists so anxious to commune with the Baptists now?

P. I can not tell: the Baptists hold the same principles they ever did. Thus, you see, "open communion, falsely so called, is a recent thing. It has not sufficient age on its side to make it respectable."

I will now prove that we—Presbyterians and Methodists—are close communionists of a strange type. But as it is late, suppose I defer it until to-morrow evening.

M. So be it.



SIXTEENTH CONVERSATION.

The Baptists Examined—(Continued.)



LAST evening I promised to prove that the Presbyterians and Methodists are more close in their communion, and less liberal, than the Baptists, said Mr. E., in commencing the Conversation this evening.

METHODIST. Yes; and if you can do that, it is more than I now believe.

PRESBYTERIAN. Well, let us examine the testimony. The Presbyterians say, in the Westminster Confession of Faith, ch. 25, sec. 2:

“The visible church consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, *with their children*, and in the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, *out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.*”

This doctrine, if true, a writer has remarked, is most melancholy and heart-rending; for, taking all the world, probably not one child out of ten thou-

sand is born of parents "*that profess the true religion.*" Therefore, they are not of "*the house and family of God*; and for them "*there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.*" What the *extraordinary* possibility is we are left to conjecture.

M. That is a very strange article of faith. I suppose our Presbyterian friends believe that they "profess the true religion." As Methodists our Arminianism is directly opposed to their Calvinism. What is to become of us?

P. That is not for me to say. Again: "A particular church," says the constitution of the Presbyterian church, "consists of a number of professing Christians, with their offspring." They become members, by baptism, for "baptism is the act whereby the parties baptized are solemnly admitted into the visible church."—P. 337. "All baptized persons are members of the church, are under its care, and subject to its government and discipline. And when they have arrived at the years of discretion, they are bound to perform all the duties of church members."—456. Here you see all baptized children are members of the church.

M. Of course, then, you allow them to come to the Lord's table.

P. Not at all. As a church we deny them that privilege. We say, "when they come to years of discretion, if they be free from scandal, appear sober and steady, and to have sufficient knowledge to discern the Lord's body, they ought to be informed

it is their duty and privilege to come to the Lord's Supper."—P. 504.

M. Do you allow these baptized church members to say when they have come to years of discretion?

P. No. "The years of discretion in young Christians can not be fixed. This must be left to the prudence of the eldership. The officers of the church are the judges of the qualifications of those to be admitted to sealing ordinances [Lord's Supper and Baptism], and of the time it is proper to admit young Christians to them."—P. 205.

M. Well, I declare, that beats the Baptists. That's close communion within close communion. You baptize them into the church — put the seal on them — make them a part of the church — call them *young Christians*, and then will not allow them to come to the Lord's table until your elders see fit! You will not allow them to judge of their own qualifications, nor of the time they should commune. I must say that it looks very queer.

P. I acknowledge it. Our conduct as a church is very inconsistent. We fence them from the Lord's table after pronouncing them baptized members of the church and young Christians. "Those who have no claim on the children's bread, can have no claim to the children's baptism."

M. But you allow all Christians of other denominations to commune with you?

P. There you catch me again. Our constitution

says, in answer to the question, "May any who profess the faith, and desire to come to the Lord's Supper, be kept from it? Such as are found to be ignorant or scandalous, notwithstanding their profession of faith and desire to come to the Lord's Supper, may and ought to be kept from that sacrament by the power which Christ hath left in his church."

M. *How much intelligence* must we Methodists have before you will allow *us* to commune with you? I suppose you call us "ignorant."

P. I can not determine that. "The officers of the church are the judges of the qualifications of those to be admitted to sealing ordinances." But one of our synods has said: "For Presbyterians to hold communion in sealing ordinances with those who deny the doctrines of grace [Arminians] through the blood of Christ, etc., is highly prejudicial to the truth as it is in Jesus. Nor can such intercommunion answer any valuable purpose to those who practice it, as two can not walk together except they be agreed." "The practice of inviting to the communion all who are of good standing in their own churches, is calculated to do much evil, and should not be continued."

M. Brother E. that pinches a little too hard. You say that to hold communion with Methodists [Arminians] "is highly prejudicial to the truth," and that it answers no valuable purpose. I hope I shall never after this hear a Presbyterian talk about

Christian liberality, nor prate against close communion. To think of them inviting us to communion when they say we "deny the doctrines of grace!"

P. Don't get excited, brother C. You see it is one thing to preach, and another to practice. We preach against the restricted communion of the Baptists because it condemns our sprinkling; and then practice close communion because it is prejudicial to the truth, and calculated to do much evil to commune with the Arminians, the ignorant, and all who are even in good standing in other churches.

M. So far as your church is concerned you have made your assertion good. You are close communionists. But you can't prove ours a closer church than the Baptist.

P. Well, let us look at your church. It is hard, however, to get at what you do permanently believe. Bishop Emory, in his History of the Discipline, says: "The Discipline, as revised at each general conference, being in itself complete, supplants all that has gone before it, and the previous editions are cast aside as of no further use. The Discipline has undergone about twenty distinct revisions." Since then there have been other revisions. At one time rules were adopted by the general conference requiring the liberation of slaves under certain restrictions. The general conference said: "In consideration that these rules *form a new basis of communion*, every person concerned who will not comply with them, shall have the liberty quietly to

withdraw himself from our society ;” or else he was to be *excluded* from the society. “But no person voluntarily withdrawn or excluded,” said the conference, “shall ever *ever partake of the Supper of the Lord with the Methodists*, till he complies with the above requisitions”—the rules referred to.

Then you had the following rule: “Let no person, who is not a member of our church, be admitted to the communion without examination, and some token given by an elder or deacon.”

M. Those rules have been abolished.

P. But they prove that your general conference makes terms of communion for the Lord’s table. Let us see what your Discipline says now: “No person shall be admitted to the Lord’s Supper among us who is guilty of any practice for which we would exclude a member of our church.”—P. 35. What do you “exclude” members for?

M. We exclude them for improper tempers, words, or actions, Discipline, p. 117; holding and disseminating, publicly or privately, doctrines contrary to our articles of religion, p. 114; neglect of the means of grace, such as the public worship of God, the Supper of the Lord, family and private prayer, searching the Scriptures, class-meetings, and prayer-meetings, p. 119; neglect of duties of any kind, imprudent conduct, and indulging sinful tempers or words, or disobedience to the order and discipline of the church, p. 120; and endeavoring

to sow dissensions in our societies, by inveighing against our doctrines or discipline, p. 121.

P. And then you say, of all the foregoing cases, "After such forms of trial and expulsion, SUCH PERSONS SHALL HAVE NO PRIVILEGES OF SOCIETY OR OF SACRAMENTS IN OUR CHURCH."—P. 124.

Suppose any of these excluded persons join the Presbyterian, or any other church; for instance, "those who hold and disseminate, publicly or privately, doctrines contrary to your articles of religion," whom you say, shalt be dealt with "as in case of *gross immorality*," 114; or who have neglected class-meetings; or who have been "disobedient to the order and discipline of your church;" or have talked against your doctrines or discipline, will you allow them to commune with you?

M. Of course we can not, according to our rules. The Discipline is positive: *they can "have no privileges of society or of sacraments in our church. No person shall be admitted to the Lord's table among us, who is guilty of ANY PRACTICE for which we would exclude a member of our church."*

P. Thus you see you are a *close communion church of the worst type*; for you simply exclude these members for neglecting an institution of men, disobedience to the order and discipline of your church, a breach of your rules, and not for immoral conduct. And not satisfied with this, you follow them with the rod, and say, they "*shall not be admitted to the Lord's table among you.*"

M. But the rule says nothing about class-meetings.

P. Grant it. But it includes them. The rule says, if he is guilty of "ANY PRACTICE" for which you would exclude a member. No difference what the *practice* is for which they are excluded, you can not let them commune.

M. But the rule applies only to excluded members.

P. Well, grant that, also, though I deny it; for the rule does not say, let *no person among us*, etc., but "LET NO PERSON BE ADMITTED TO THE LORD'S TABLE AMONG US." There are hundreds in other churches who have been excluded from your church. You can not let them commune. If you have the right to exclude *one* from the Lord's table, you have the right to exclude *more*. And as you *do* exclude them, you are a CLOSE COMMUNION CHURCH, according to your Discipline.

Your Discipline (page 114) says, "Those ministers or preachers who hold and disseminate, publicly or privately, doctrines which are contrary to your articles of religion," shall be dealt with "*as in cases of gross immorality!*" And that, "after such form of trial and expulsion, the person so expelled shall have no *privilege of society or of sacraments in our church,*" etc.

Thus, if a minister holds or preaches in your church the doctrine of final perseverance, or any thing that is contrary to your articles of religion,

he is to be dealt with as in cases of "*gross immorality*," and is to have *no privilege of society or of sacraments* in your church.

M. Yes, I can not help admitting it, with the Discipline before me.

P. Is not that a *pretty, queer, close kind of close communion*? Your Discipline again says, page 121, "If a member of our church shall be clearly convicted of endeavoring to sow dissensions in any of our societies, by inveighing against either our doctrines or discipline, such person so offending; * * if he persist in such pernicious practices, he shall be expelled from the church;" and "*such persons shall have no privileges of society or of sacraments in our church*," etc.—P. 124. Have you not expelled a great many under that rule? Did you not expel hundreds of Methodist Protestants for talking against your Discipline?

M. It is too true, what you say. We did expel them under that rule. It is a painful part of our history.

P. Will you allow them to commune?

M. Of course we can not, and abide by our Discipline.

P. Then, again, you exclude them for "neglect of duties of any kind," and "disobedience to the order and discipline of [your] church." Here you have so many causes for exclusion that it is almost impossible to enumerate them, so I will not attempt it.

Now, I contend that your rule virtually excludes from your communion every member of every other church. Your ministers have no authority for giving a general invitation to the Lord's table. The form of invitation, as given in your Discipline, is only to be given to the members of your church, as one of your bishops says. (See HEDDING on Discipline.) It reads thus: "Ye that do truly and earnestly repent of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbors, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy ways; draw near with faith, and take this holy sacrament to your comfort: and, devoutly kneeling, make your humble confession to Almighty God."—P. 153. If you know of any authority for giving an invitation to members of any other churches, I should like to know it.

M. I can not find any thing more than what you have given.

P. The only authority you had for inviting members of other churches to commune with you, you have abolished. That was very restricting, and read, "Let no person, who is not a member of our church, be admitted to communion without examination, and some token given by an elder or deacon." In abolishing that rule, you have destroyed every thing in your Discipline that allowed you to admit any members of other churches to your communion. And now the rule is:

"Let NO PERSON be admitted to the Lord's table

AMONG US, *who is guilty of ANY PRACTICE for which WE WOULD exclude a member of our church.*”—P. 35.

I have shown for what you do exclude them — for the very “practices” of which every Presbyterian, Congregationalist, Episcopalian, Lutheran, Free Methodist, and Baptist is guilty. Now, how can you, with any show of consistency, ask them to commune with you?

M. I don’t see how we can; for they are all “disobedient to the order and discipline of our church,” and such, the Discipline says, “shall have no privilege of society or of sacraments” in our church.

P. Now read this extract, and you will see that Bishop Hedding unsparingly condemns open communion:

“Is it proper for a preacher to give out a general invitation in the congregation to members in good standing in other churches to come to the Lord’s Supper?” “No: for the most unworthy persons are apt to think themselves in good standing, and sometimes persons who are not members of any church, will take the liberty from such an invitation to come. And again; there are some communities called churches which, from heretical doctrines or immoral practices, have no claim to the privileges of Christians, and ought not to be admitted to the communion of any Christian people. The rule in that case is as follows, and it ought to be strictly adhered to: ‘Let no person who is not a member

of our church be admitted to the communion without examination, and some token given, by an elder or deacon. No person shall be admitted to the Lord's Supper among us who is guilty of any practice for which we would exclude a member of our church.'"—*Hedding on Discipline*, p. 72.

Thus, you see, whenever your ministers give a general invitation to the Lord's table, they *violate their discipline and ordination vows*.

M. You have clearly condemned me out of our own books. I was not aware of the teachings of our Discipline, or I should have been more careful of my charges against the Baptists. I shall take care in future, and remember the old proverb, and not throw stones at my neighbors, whom I begin to see are more consistent than we are.

P. But I have not done yet. I will now prove that the Baptists are more liberal as a church than you are. You are well aware that many of your ministers and members have been very severe in your denunciations of them.

M. I know we have not been very tender of their feelings; and have endeavored to place them in no enviable light before the people, especially on communion, calling them narrow-minded, selfish, and bigoted.

P. Yes, that's a one-stringed instrument some of you have played with delight. Whenever the Baptists would preach on baptism, against the usurpation of power by the ministry, or the right of a

church to govern itself, contending earnestly for the rights of the people, you have commenced fiddling away on "com-mu-ni-on, clos-e com-mu-ni-on!" thus diverting the attention of the people from the true issue between you. It would have been wiser to have kept silent on a point where you are so very vulnerable. But to prove what I said. You have what you call love-feasts and class-meetings. Will you allow me to come to these meetings? What is your rule? We can only determine the right of your practice by the rule governing it.

M. That is fair and right. As a Methodist, I believe in sticking to our rules: we can only tell what a church believes by its articles of faith, and rules of practice. Hence, we tell our ministers: "*You are not to mend our rules, but to keep them;*" and, "*remember, a Methodist preacher is to mind every point, great and small, in the Methodist Discipline.*"—P. 62. Thus, you see, we are clear on that point.

We have no rule now, that I can find, that allows any person to come to our class-meetings and love-feasts but our members. At one time we did admit strangers to our love-feasts twice or thrice, with the utmost caution, and no more, unless they became members. And as to our class-meetings, at every other meeting we also admitted strangers, but these only twice or thrice. But now we have abolished these rules, and of course no stranger is allowed to enter either our love-feasts or class-meetings. As to our love-feasts, our own members are required by

the Discipline to have quarterly tickets of admission. —P. 96. But in many places our preachers don't carry out the rules, and hold open-door class-meetings.

P. Now, how do you receive members?

M. "Let none be admitted on trial, except they are well recommended by one you know, or until they have met twice or thrice in class."—*Discipline*, p. 38. Again: "Let none be received into the church until they are recommended by a leader with whom they have met at least six months on trial, and have been baptized; and shall on examination by the minister in charge, before the church, give satisfactory assurances both of the correctness of their faith, and their willingness to observe and keep the rules of the church. Nevertheless, if a member in good standing in any other orthodox church shall desire to unite with us, such applicant may, by giving satisfactory answers to the usual inquiries, be received at once into full fellowship." —P. 37.

P. Thus, you have to try them six months, to see whether they will do for church members. Your very probation implies a doubt. They may be good Christians, and yet you will not admit them into full connexion. When you have a "revival," some of your ministers will pass round with a slip of paper among the anxious to get them to unite on trial. They don't wait until they are converted and baptized; no! they must first get them committed

to the Methodist church, as if that was the one thing needful. That is one reason why some churches object to joining with you in union meetings. They have to wait for conversion and baptism before church membership; but you can pop an individual's name down at once as a probationer, without being particular about his conversion. Should he not suit you, all that you have to do, according to your Discipline, is to "drop" him, even without a trial. The civil law never "drops" any one thus.

M. Are we not all probationers? Our probationary relation is only a trial. The individual may not like our church, and we may not like him; in such cases the copartnership can be dissolved by either party. You forget that our probationers are not in the church. They only occupy a vestibule relation, though they have nearly all the privileges of full members—even the Lord's Supper.—*Discipline*, p. 32. How is it with the Baptists?

P. In the Baptist churches all who have been obedient to the heavenly calling, are looked upon as good enough to be admitted at once into full fellowship, and are entitled to all the privileges of a citizen of the kingdom, without suspicion, or fear of the result. Which is the most liberal and just?

M. I must confess the Baptists, in this particular, are the most consistent. If a man is truly converted and baptized, he is certainly entitled to church membership. I have, to be frank, been at a loss to

understand the justice of our probationary system. But I have not troubled myself much about it.

P. Am I unjust or uncharitable when I say, it appears to me that you think more highly of your church, and guard more carefully your love-feasts and class-meetings, than you do the Lord's table! You will not admit members into your church without six months' trial — that is, those who have never been members of any church — and none to your class-meetings and love-feasts; and yet you invite all to the Lord's Supper. Do you not thus place the inventions of men above the institutions of Christ?

M. It does look like it; *but it's all according to our Discipline.*

P. Now let us look at your general conference. Who compose it? Read, if you please.

M. The preachers. "The general conference shall be composed of one member for every thirty members of each annual conference," etc., says our Discipline, p. 45.

P. And who compose your annual conferences?

M. "All the traveling preachers."—P. 48.

P. Thus, you see, your general and annual conferences are composed exclusively of preachers. Your laymen, however intelligent, have no voice there. Your general conference has "full powers to make rules and regulations" for your church.—P. 46.

M. But there are limitations and restrictions.

P. Certainly; but every limitation and restriction, except changing your articles of religion, can be swept away by a recommendation of three-fourths of all the members [preachers] of the several annual conferences, who shall be present and vote, and by a vote of two-thirds of the members of the general conference.—P. 48.

One of your members writes to *The Methodist* as follows: “Our laity have no representation in the legislative assemblies of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Delegates to the general conference are the clergy—they represent the clergy of the annual conferences. A Christian church should be strictly a government of principle in relation to the governed. The right to be represented where law is made to govern, is not only essential to civil freedom, but is equally the basis of religious liberty. Is there any reason why any class of men should assume the right to disfranchise another class of men, and claim to be their legislators, administrators and judges of all the laws, and every possible application of them? In withholding from our laity a right of voice in their government, it deprives them of the stronger motives for activity and liberality.”

Thus, your preachers have “full power to make rules and regulations for [your] church.” And why not, when they formed the church—sixty preachers, who met at Baltimore, Md., 1784. The minutes of that conference have this remarkable admission—“At this conference it was unanimously

agreed, that our circumstances made it expedient for us to become a separate body, under the denomination of the Methodist Episcopal Church. * *

* WE FORMED OURSELVES INTO AN INDEPENDENT CHURCH." Look at it: WE [*sixty preachers*] FORMED OURSELVES INTO THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH! What are the preachers but the Methodist Episcopal Church?

M. Our preachers the church! Certainly not.

P. I will give you a few facts to ponder over. In 1844 the Methodist Episcopal Church was divided by geographical lines, and two churches formed, the church North and the church South. The ministers divided the church by mutual agreement. Besides the churches, schools, colleges, etc., etc., the Methodist Episcopal Church South was entitled to some \$400,000 from the "Book Concern." The Northern church refused to pay it over. The church South instituted suit to recover it. The best legal talent was employed on both sides. The church South took the position that the general conference, composed of bishops and traveling preachers, only was the church, and hence had the right to divide it, and that the agreement entered into was binding in law. I have not time to give you the pleas of the counsel for the church South; besides, they are substantially embodied in the decision of the Court, as rendered by JUSTICE NELSON, which is as follows: "The Methodist Episcopal church of the United States was established, in its government, doctrine

and discipline, by a general conference of the traveling preachers in this communion, in 1784. Down to that time, the Methodist societies in America had been governed by John Wesley, the founder of this denomination of Christians, through the agency of his assistants. During this year, the entire government was taken into the hands of the traveling preachers, with his approbation and assent. They organized it, established its doctrines and discipline, appointed the several authorities — superintendents or bishops, ministers and preachers — to administer its polity, and promulgate its doctrines and teachings throughout the land. From that time to this, the source and fountain of all its temporal power are the traveling preachers in this connection in general conference assembled. *The lay members of the church have no part or connection with its governmental organization, and never had.* The traveling preachers comprise the embodiment of its power, ecclesiastical and temporal; and when assembled in general conference, according to the usages and discipline of the church, *represent themselves, AND HAVE NO CONSTITUENTS.*”—*Appendix to Property Case*, pp. 10, 11.

Both parties submitted to this decision. No bill of exceptions was filed. Have I not sustained my assertion, that the general conference is the Methodist Episcopal church?

M. I was aware that our ministers made our laws, and it has caused a great deal of disaffection

and disturbance in our church; but really, the idea that they are the Methodist Episcopal Church, is new to me. Yet I can not see how I can deny it, when they have put in the claim themselves, and it has been sustained by the law. How is it with the Baptists?

P. "Every Baptist church is a sovereign democracy, on which devolves the duty of executing the laws of Christ; and every Baptist feels that he is a sovereign citizen of the kingdom of Jesus Christ." Every Baptist church is complete in itself. All Baptist associations, conventions, etc., are representative bodies.

"Baptist associations are made up of delegates from churches, consisting of the pastor, and two or more laymen chosen for the purpose. Pastors, however, are not essential to associations, but are always sent as a part of the delegation, if the church has one at the time. Associations, like committees and councils, have no authority over the churches. Meetings of State conventions, missionary, Bible, publication societies, etc., are of similar character, originating in the church, and deriving all their consequence from her. Any society or convention for church purposes, not dependent upon the church, is a departure from the Divine plan for promoting Christianity upon earth."

There is one thing more: Have you the right to call and settle your own pastor?

M. No. Our Discipline gives the bishops the

power of sending the preachers where they please. (P. 86.) But sometimes we petition.

P. But what right have you to petition? It is not in your Discipline. You are bound to receive the minister sent, or rebel.

M. I know we have no right to petition, and that it is optionary with the bishop to grant or refuse our request. Ministers have been sent back against the remonstrance of the people.

P. Every Baptist church calls and settles its own pastor, each member having a vote in the question; and no minister becomes a *member* of that church without being received by a vote of the church.

Did you ever receive a minister in that way? No; he comes and takes charge of your society or church, presides at your meetings, appoints or removes your class leaders at pleasure, and performs other things, without ever being received by vote among you. His position as a minister entitles him to that.

Now, in face of all the foregoing facts, are not the Baptists more liberal than you are? Do not they possess more of the elements of Christian liberty and liberality than your church?

M. From the evidence before me, I must admit the truth of what you say. You have shown me things in our Discipline that unequivocally condemn all our claims to a liberal church. The fact is, I was not aware of their existence until now.

P. There, again, you are not alone. I once heard

one of your ministers proclaim a copy of your Discipline a forgery, because there were things quoted from it by an opponent in debate that he could not possibly believe were there! But I have shown you no more than what you say your Discipline maintains, and what your own members have charged against your church, and who have left it on account thereof.

Nay, at this day a strong effort is being made by many of your leading members to get a change in your government. Whether it will fail, as preceding ones have done, remains to be seen.

It is amusing to hear some of your ministers try to prove that you have a liberal church, when

1. All laws governing your church are made by your preachers.—Dis., p. 46.

2. Your general conference is composed exclusively of preachers.—P. 45.

3. Your annual conferences are composed exclusively of preachers.—48.

4. Your bishops are elected to office by preachers.—86.

5. Your presiding elders appointed by preachers—the bishops.—90.

6. Your missionary and tract societies, and your printing and bookselling departments, controlled by your preachers.—236–248.

7. Your candidates for the itinerancy received by the preachers.—49–50.

8. Your preachers appointed to the stations and

circuits by your preachers (bishops), without any right on your part to reject. You must do it by rebellion.—86.

9. Your quarterly meetings presided over by preachers.—53.

10. Your class leaders appointed and removed at pleasure by your preachers.—96.

11. Your stewards and trustees nominated for office by your preachers.—55, 262.

12. Your probationers received on trial by your preachers.—96.

13. Your members tried by a committee appointed and presided over by preachers.—118.

14. Your preachers tried by preachers.—110–118.

Now, in face of all these facts of your Discipline, how can you say the Methodist Episcopal is a free and liberal church, and denounce the Baptists as illiberal and intolerant? No wonder that so many of your preachers are such earnest defenders of your polity, and so bitterly opposed to all change in your government. Strange it is that so many of you believe it, and quietly submit to it, and let the preachers have it all their own way.

But I see we shall not be able to finish our examination of the Baptists to-night; so suppose we devote another evening to the subject.

M. It will be very agreeable to me; and you may expect me early, for I am deeply interested in the result. Good night.



SEVENTEENTH CONVERSATION.

The Baptists Examined—(Concluded.)



THIS evening brother C. was earlier in his visit than usual; and had hardly taken his seat before he introduced the subject under investigation, by saying:

M. Well, brother E., this evening brings us to the close of our examinations; and I am anxious to hear your concluding remarks on the Baptists. Let me have all you can say in their favor.

P. That is impossible now; so I will give you a few facts touching some of the leading and distinguishing features or characteristics of the Baptists; but these will be briefly stated.

M. Don't be too brief; for I am more than ever anxious to hear and learn.

P. In the first place, then, let me give you the following statement of Baptist principles, from the able pen of Dr. ARMITAGE:

“The Divine truths which have maintained the

integrity of the Baptist churches, as distinct from all other religionists, are these, namely:

“1. That the Word of God, as found in the inspired manuscripts, is the only rule by which the church is to be governed, edified, and built up in its doctrines, ordinances and discipline; and that no creed, liturgy, rubric, catechism, decree, law, or tradition, is to be set up as of any authority whatever, in any department connected with the up-building, defence, and perpetuity of Christ’s ransomed church.

“2. That his church is composed only of regenerate persons, and that, therefore, all interference in its affairs on the part of the state, or of civil rulers, is an unwarranted dictation, oppression, and tyranny, that must not be brooked, but is to be resisted, broken, and shaken off by all true lovers of soul liberty, on the ground that Christ, and Christ only, is the “head over all things to the church.”

“3. That the immersion of the body in water is the only baptism whereby men can be admitted into fellowship with Christ’s church: therefore, that all other symbols of the mystic union are spurious, and deviations from Christ’s appointed badge of discipleship; and are to be rebuked as human innovations upon the simplicity of primitive Christianity.

“4. That only those persons in whom the Spirit of God has wrought a radical renovation of the soul, by faith in Jesus, are, or can be entitled, under any pretext whatever, to a place in a gospel church as

members thereof; and that the introduction of any other class, by virtue of parentage, or ecclesiastical decretal, is a direct prostitution of the purposes for which the Founder of the Church established it in the earth.

“5. That regenerated persons thus buried with Christ in the first ordinance of the Gospel, are the only persons who do or can possess the requisite qualifications which entitle Christ’s people to the benefits of communion, watchcare, and discipline in his church; so that any reversal of this order, is to dispute, nullify and supersede his authority in his own house. And —

“6. That the church of Christ is a simple brotherhood of renewed spirits, walking in the paths of gospel obedience; that they all stand upon a perfect parity in the household of faith, under the legislation and leadership of their Elder Brother; and that, therefore, he disallows among them all orders and distinctions that savor of a human hierarchy, and all ecclesiastical domination whatever, as inconsistent with the freedom and right of self-government, which inheres in each individual congregation of his elect, as composing the church of God in any given place.

“These truths are broad and fundamental and plain, as “Christ taught them,” and yet, with the exception of one or two points, they are held by none but Baptists in all their bearings practically. They ramify through all the ground-work and life of Christianity. And so far from being considered

by the Christian world as small points, external and non-essential, they have drawn a broad belt across the bounds of Christendom, and divided the Christian world into two. There is not another doctrine of Christianity of which this can be said. The one question as to what material constitutes the church, and by what law it is to be built up into the living temple, has agitated the church for fifteen hundred years, and troubles its waters more to-day than ever before. It has consumed the best learning and talent of Christianity. Millions of the best minds are devoted to the theme to-day. Every pulpit and press in the British empire is handling the subject, with its embarrassments and responsibilities, and it is engendering nearly as much discussion and profound feeling in the Republic itself. The man who tells you that the only thing involved here is a mere external rite, is as blind as he well can be to the times in which he lives. The truths involved are precisely those, and those only, which necessitate the existence of the Baptist world on one side, as distinct from all other Christians, and the Pedobaptist world on the other side, as distinct from us."

M. Those are certainly grand fundamental principles. No wonder the Baptists contend so earnestly for their success. Really, if I were a Baptist, I should feel proud of them.

P. They are the great truths of Christianity. But let us go a little back in history, and learn something more of the Baptists:

“A departure from the Scriptures, in respect to baptism, was hardly sanctioned in the church, when, with the conscious weakness of error, it summoned persecution to its aid. In 413, A.D., re-baptism, as it was termed, was forbidden throughout the Roman Empire, under penalty of death. In the following year the Council of Carthage, of which Augustine was the president, decided: ‘We will that whosoever denies that little children, by baptism, are freed from perdition and eternally saved, that they be accursed.’ At an earlier day than this, the same spirit had prevailed, but it was not until the church received protection of the emperors, that it could display itself in force.

“Thus early in the school of persecution, and at the point of their ‘new conception,’ did Baptists learn the great principle of soul liberty. That lesson they have never forgotten. Under varying names—in widely distant lands—through long and weary centuries—they have toiled and suffered in its defence. Denied a freedom for themselves, they have answered to the wrong by giving freedom to all mankind. Theirs is a history stained with no blood but their own; lighted by no martyring flames, save those in which their faithful perished. Others have contended as stoutly for their own chosen creed, but none so firmly for the creeds of all. In this they stand alone.

“Can you point me to a creed of the Reformation which does not confer upon the magistrate a power

in religion? Luther says of false teachers: 'I am very averse to the shedding of blood. 'Tis sufficient they should be banished, or put under restraint as madmen.' Neither Melancthon, Bucer, or Beza can be acquitted of sentiments either similar or worse. And Calvin—would to God the great man's memory were free from the wrongs of Servetus—Cranmer could suffer unto death with heroic firmness for his own faith, but could wring from the tender youth of the reluctant Edward, a warrant for the death of those who differed; a warrant signed with tears, and coupled with a clause like Pilate's.* We 'honor the Scotch churches,' and dwell with sadness on the story of their wrongs; but the sufferings they endured were only such as they commended unsparingly to others. John Knox would have burned an adversary of 'God's eternal predestination' as coolly as you would drown a kitten. Hear him, in answer to one of those Baptist pleas for soul-liberty which, early in the reign of Elizabeth, was published in Great Britain. Alluding to persecuting Christians, the Baptist writes: 'Be these, I pray you, the sheep whom God has set forth in the midst of wolves. Can the sheep persecute the wolf?' And Knox replies: 'I will not now so much labor to confute by my pen, as my full purpose is to lay the same to thy charge, if I shall apprehend thee in any commonwealth where justice

* Hume, vol. iii., p. 353.

against blasphemers may be ministered as God's Word requireth.'

"Nearly a hundred years later, when the Baptists of London had published their sentiments to the world, and when Roger Williams was battling for religious freedom with the Puritans of Massachusetts, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church in Scotland, forbade 'ALL *printers in the kingdom* from printing or re-printing *any* confession of faith, or protestation, or reason pro or contra, without warrant, subscribed by the clerk of the assembly.'" Four years later, Roman Catholics were ordered to renounce their 'obstinacy,' under penalty of banishment or imprisonment.

"Nor was it different in this western world. Puritans, Churchmen and Catholics alike joined in persecution. The best example of *toleration* was furnished by the Catholics of Maryland; but *soul liberty* was defended by Baptists alone. In due time they won some converts; but in Rhode Island, in Massachusetts, in Pennsylvania, in Virginia, and throughout the land, the work was mainly their own. The first Continental Congress had not been ten days in session, when an agent of the Baptists knocked at the door of the old Carpenters' Hall, to ask that freedom of conscience might be given, not to themselves alone, but to all the dwellers in the land.

"Well does George Bancroft declare, with a candor which does credit to his mind and heart, 'freedom of conscience, unlimited freedom of mind,

was, from first, the trophy of the Baptists.* And again: ‘The party was trodden under foot with foul reproaches and most arrogant scorn; and its history is written in the blood of myriads of the German peasantry; but its principles, safe in their immortality, escaped with Roger Williams to Providence; and his colony is the witness that *naturally* the paths of the Baptists are paths of freedom, pleasantness, and peace.’†

“The *fact* is indubitable, but its *connection* with our peculiar views of baptism is often overlooked. Our peculiarities here awakened persecution, and persecution taught us the value of soul liberty.

“A similar argument might be urged in relation to other truths. One hundred years ago, Baptists stood alone in the defence of a converted church membership. Infant sprinkling admitted members into the church without even a profession of godliness. Our views of Baptism forbade it. Hence, baptism became the gate in which men stood to battle for a spiritual church.”‡

“That Baptists are of ancient origin, may be seen, not only in the Scriptures, but also in ecclesiastical history, imperfectly and partially as it has yet been written,” as it may be seen in the works of Limborch, Mosheim, Neander, and a host of other Pedobaptist writers. Within the present century the King of Holland selected his chaplain, Dr. J. J.

* Bancroft, vol. ii., p. 66.

† Ibid, p. 459.

‡ “Baptists Not Exclusive,” pp. 44-48.

DERMONT, and Dr. Upeij, Professor of Theology at the University of Groningen, *both of the Dutch Reformed Church*, to draw up a history of the Dutch Baptists. In the authentic volume which they prepared and published at Breda, in 1819, they arrive at the following deliberate conclusion :

“ We have now seen that the Baptists, who were formerly called Anabaptists, and, in later times, Mennonites, were the original Waldenses, and who long in the history of the church received the honor of that origin. *On this account the Baptists may be considered as the only Christian community which has stood since the days of the Apostles, and as a Christian society which has preserved pure the doctrines of the Gospel through all ages.* The perfectly correct external and internal economy of the Baptist denomination tends to confirm the truth, disputed by the Romish church, that the reformation brought about in the sixteenth century, was in the highest degree necessary, and, at the same time, *goes to refute the erroneous notion of the Catholics that their communion is the most ancient.*”

Let it be remembered that these learned men were not *Baptists* ; that they proclaimed the result of their diligent research in the ear of a king, who listened unwillingly to their conclusions. Let it also be remembered, that as a result of their investigation, *the government of Holland offered to the Baptist churches in the kingdom the support of the State ; but, true to their principles, THEY DECLINED IT.**

* “ Baptists not Exclusive.”

M. That is certainly a noble tribute to their independence and loyalty to their principles.

P. The Baptists have ever been unflinching defenders of civil and religious liberty. In the times of Constantine the Donatists asked, "What has the emperor to do with the church? What have Christians to do with kings? What have bishops to do at court?" For this they have been fined, whipped, imprisoned, banished, and martyred. Pedobaptists have been their bitterest persécutors.

As I have already shown you, on May 2nd, 1648, the Presbyterians, having the ascendancy in the British Parliament, "passed a law against heretics, which is hardly to be paralleled among Protestants. One of the errors specified was, the holding that the baptism of infants is unlawful and void, and that such person ought to be baptized again. The person implicated was, on confession, to 'renounce it in the public congregation,' or, 'in case of refusal, be committed to prison till he find sureties that he shall not publish the said error or errors any more.'" —*Neal's History of the Puritans*, part iii., ch. 10.

M. That law is almost equal to perpetual imprisonment, at least to the poor.

P. True. And now let us look at Pedobaptist intolerance in this country. As early as November, 1664, in Boston, Mass., a law was passed for the suppression of anti-church and state sects, the penalty of which is as follows: "It is ordered and agreed, that if any person or persons within this

jurisdiction shall either openly oppose or condemn the baptizing of infants, or go about secretly to seduce others from the approbation or use thereof; or shall purposely depart from the congregation at the ministration of the ordinance, * * every such person or persons shall be sentenced to banishment."

Another law was passed prohibiting all conversation of the common people with any of those heretics, such as Quakers and Baptists; and persons giving them entertainment were to be fined five pounds. They were debarred from citizenship, and not allowed to make use of a house of public worship, without license from the authorities, under penalty of forfeiture of house and land whereon it stood.

One poor man, for refusing to have his child baptized, and who gave it as his opinion that infant baptism was an anti-Christian ordinance, was tied up and whipped.

On the 8th of March, 1680, the doors of the First Baptist Church of Boston were nailed up by the marshal, and a notice posted thereon, warning all persons against holding any meetings, or opening the doors, "as they will answer the contrary at their peril.

Messrs. CLARKE, HOLMES, and CRANDALL were apprehended by a constable, near Lynn, on Lord's day, while Mr. CLARKE was preaching. The court fined Mr. CLARKE £25, Mr. HOLMES £30, and Mr.

CRANDALL £5, or be PUBLICLY WHIPPED. Mr. HOLMES was whipped thirty stripes, and in such an unmerciful manner, that for a great many days he could not rest but upon his knees and elbows.

In Virginia three ministers were tried for "*preaching the Gospel of the Son of God*, contrary to the statute in that case provided, and consequently disturbers of the peace."

Rev. Mr. MARSHALL, a traveling Baptist preacher, was put in the stocks on a warm summer's day for his heresy and aggression on parish lines, and was afterwards imprisoned in Windham jail, Conn., where, it is said, the strange record of his indictment remains: "*for preaching the Gospel contrary to law!*"

These are but a few instances of cruelty that might be enumerated, transacted in boasted New England, and by our Presbyterian and Congregational friends.

Let me refer you now to the persecutions in Sweden within the last fifteen years. In Stockholm, Sweden, where Lutheranism is the state religion, the court preacher, Wenshom, accompanied by police officers, entered the house of Mr. FORSELL and baptized by force his little child, six months old. At another time the authorities came down on two poor families, seized from each their only cow, and sold them at public auction, to pay the district sergeant for carrying off their children to be sprinkled, and to pay the priest his

fee. In many cases Baptist parents have had their children taken from them by the policeman, carried to the priest, and forcibly baptized. Baptist ministers have been imprisoned and fined for preaching the Gospel not according to law. Fifteen brethren and sisters were imprisoned on bread and water as a punishment for taking the Lord's Supper out of the state church.

Trials and persecutions of various kinds followed those who thus dare to obey God rather than man. They were summoned before tribunals, civil and ecclesiastical, fined, imprisoned on bread and water, and often the rites of marriage were denied to those Baptists who were unable to pay a fee sufficiently large to overcome the scruples of the priests. The Lutheran priests refused to perform the marriage ceremony for those who were not communicants in the state church; and ministers of any other church are forbidden to perform this ceremony under penalty of three years' imprisonment in a fortress, at hard labor.

Dr. STEANE, an Englishman, who visited Sweden, writes: "Their baptisms have to be stealthily administered on some lone sea-shore, or in a hidden nook of some inland lake, where no hostile eye may see them, and no lurking policeman spring upon them. Some have been baptized since we have been here, but the blessed deed, as though it had been the perpetration of a great crime, was done at midnight, and so secretly that even we heard nothing of it till afterward."

At one place Mr. WIBERG was sitting quietly one morning, explaining the Word of God to some friends, when soon the house was filled with enemies of God and all righteousness. They pushed him off the chair on which he sat, giving him repeated blows on the head and pulling out his hair by the roots. They then dragged him out of the house to another place, where they recommenced striking and kicking him. They then took him to the district sergeant, who had him placed in the county prison. It was soon noised abroad that he was in prison, and the yard was soon filled with people, who came to see the infamous "*baptizer*." So clamorous was the mob to see him, that the sergeant had him brought out before them, when he was made the butt of their scoffs, jeers, and ridicule. Some swore and cursed him, while others laughed at him. One old gentleman spat in his face, and said he ought to be destroyed. But so great was his joy that he had been counted worthy to suffer reproach for the cause of his Master, that he could not refrain from singing songs of praise and speaking the word to others within the prison. When his enemies heard this, they begged the sergeant to have him sent to the provincial penitentiary that same evening. They arrived there with him about midnight. Here he was met by the jail-keeper with curses. They then proceeded to clip his hair close to his head, stripped him of his clothes, and drenched him with cold water; after which, they put on

him a prisoner's dress, of very coarse, thin, gray material, and threw him into a dark cell, where, as the weather was very cold, he was seized with a violent chill. From this place he was removed to a cell where he could see, where he remained three days, after which he was driven on a prisoner's car to his native place to be set at liberty. After this, several times was he pursued with loaded guns, and when going out to preach with others they were often obliged to lie concealed during the day, and hold their meetings at the midnight hour.*

This is but one scene of the sufferings the Baptists of Sweden have had to pass through: and all the result of Pedobaptist intolerance, the Lutheran priests being the chief instigators. But God has wonderfully blessed them. On September 21st, 1848, the first Baptist church, consisting of six members, was organized in Sweden. There are now ten associations, one hundred and eighty-three churches, and about twelve thousand members. Last year, one minister baptized seven hundred.

And the glorious work which God has done in Sweden, has had a reflex influence on the Baptists of the United States; for several hundred converted Swedes have come to this country, and are among the very best of our foreign population, standing up nobly for the truth.

M. Certainly that is a frightful record of intolerance and injustice.

* Baptists in Sweden.

P. It surely is. And yet the Baptists, in spite of it all, have gone on preaching against church and state, advocating religious liberty, and unflinchingly maintaining their views of Bible doctrine. They have kept free from all entangling alliances. While Episcopalians, Lutherans, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists have courted and been supported by the civil power, the Baptists have relied alone upon the Word of God for their success. Their watch-fires have ever blazed in liberty. It is to the praise of the Baptists, that while they have been bitterly persecuted, they have not persecuted others.

In the face of the foregoing facts, how does it look to hear those Pedobaptist churches now talk about the bigotry of the Baptists, who persecuted Roger Williams for advocating religious toleration—soul liberty—and made him flee in mid-winter to the forests, inhabited only by wild beasts and Indians, where, as he tells us, he had to live fourteen weeks, “not knowing what bread or bed did mean?” How does it look to hear those charge the Baptists with illiberality and narrow-mindedness, who have been advocates and supporters of church and state, and who have passed some of the most intolerant laws against civil and religious liberty?—who have nailed up Baptist meeting houses, fined, imprisoned, whipped and banished Baptists for denouncing infant baptism, and preaching, contrary to law, the Gospel of the Son of God!

M. It certainly is not very consistent: and the

Presbyterians, especially, would do well to look back in history before they denounce the Baptists.

P. Now, let me ask you, are not the Baptists as willing and ready to engage in all great public enterprizes and charities as we are? Are they not as willing to meet with us on an equally liberal basis on all matters pertaining to the public weal? Have they not a purely democratic form of church government, in which every member has a voice, each church complete in itself, and doing all that a church of Jesus Christ has the right to do? Have they not as an intelligent and public spirited ministry and membership as we have? Where can you find a denomination having more illustrious names connected with it, than you find among the Baptists? Where can you find a denomination doing more for education? Where can you find a church that is doing more in proportion for the great religious and benevolent objects of the age?

The following condensation of facts, by Rev. J. H. GILMORE, Rochester, N. Y., show what the Baptists are doing:

“Ignoring altogether those brethren who have fallen out by the way, we may estimate the baptized believers of the United States at two millions. But it is not in point of numbers alone that we are entitled to respect ourselves. During the fifty years ending in 1860 the contributions of the Baptist denomination in the United States for the diffusion of Christianity amounted to \$15,579,220. The

contributions of the Baptists of the Northern States alone during the past year, to our great denominational societies, amounted to \$521,932. A moderate estimate of the amount received by Baptist State Conventions, feeble churches and educational societies, will swell this sum to three-quarters of a million. Then the contributions of our Southern brethren, and the contributions of Baptist churches to union societies and purely benevolent organizations, are still to be added; and, as the result, we can not doubt that the Baptists of the United States are contributing *one million dollars, year by year*, for the religious reformation of the world. These are my estimates. Since I have committed them to paper the Home Mission Society has asserted, after careful examination and extended correspondence, that the Baptists of this country are expending half a million per annum on home missions alone. In addition to all this, 692,286 scholars are instructed in the Sunday school, at an estimated yearly expense of \$346,143; and \$4,653,857 per annum would be a low estimate for the support of Baptist preaching, and the maintenance of Baptist church property throughout our land. Adopting these estimates, the Baptists of the United States expend *six millions of dollars, year by year*, for the support and diffusion of Christianity. Surely, we are neither a poor nor a penurious people."

The Baptists have now thirty colleges and fourteen theological institutions, in the United States,

besides a great many institutions of learning of a lesser grade, and thirty-eight religious periodicals. The American Baptist Home Mission Society alone, during the past year, employed three hundred and sixty-seven missionaries. During the last sixty-seven years, Baptist churches have been organized at the rate of one church each week, and Baptist ministers ordained at about the same rate. In the United States there are over eight thousand Regular Baptist ministers, and eleven hundred thousand members.

Taking all these facts into consideration, you must surely, with me, answer all the foregoing questions in the affirmative. Then why oppose the Baptists in the way many of our ministers and members do? Why appeal to the false sympathies of the people, and try to array prejudice and bigotry in opposition against them? If they are vulnerable, they are vulnerable in principle. On principle, then, if they are to be assailed, on principle let the attack be made. To this they will not object; and from a candid investigation they will not shrink. Let the opposition be manly and Christianly. I have been ashamed at the low and vulgar way they have been denounced by Pedobaptists. I have been mortified in seeing the pitiful expedients resorted to by our ministers in their denunciations of the Baptists.

And now, have I not made out my case fairly and clearly, from the testimony of our own witnesses?

Must you not admit that the Baptist churches are founded, to say the very least, on as liberal principles as any of the Pedobaptist churches, and infinitely more so than many of them?

M. Really, I never thought you could turn the argument so overwhelmingly against us. To think of charging the Baptists with selfishness, bigotry, and intolerance, as we have done, and then to find that they are less so than we are—to discover the truth is on their side! I blush to think of my ignorance. I see no possible way of avoiding your conclusions; they are reasonable and just. And in the future I shall be under the necessity of shaping my conduct according to the light I have now received. I know well what I shall have to meet. Scoffs and jeers await me. By many I shall be charged with being a turn-coat and backslider, and my character may be assailed. But trusting in my Saviour, assisted by his grace, I will follow him, and leave the result in his hand. He knows the truthfulness of my intention. May God help me!

P. “Amen,” my dear brother, as you Methodists love to say, and he will help you. “As thy day is, so shall thy strength be.” Let us bear in mind, that obedience to our Saviour is our first duty—that “it is better to obey God than man.” Jesus is our great pattern—we must follow him. He has said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” To him we must give account. His word is our only rule of conduct, and obedience to it brings its own

reward. Never mind whether men smile or frown — whether they commend or denounce — whether they speak the truth or slanderous words. Do right and fear not. God will take care of you. “He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me.” “Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.” If we are saved, it will be as by fire. The pure gold can only stand that test. Let us be satisfied with God’s order, for all attempts to improve upon his plan, will at last end in shame, confusion, and ruin.

[Here the two neighbors closed their Conversations, and, after a brief consultation and prayer for divine strength, determined their future course of action. Then clasping each other’s hand fervently, with a cordial “good night” they separated. From the cheerful face and lively step of brother C., as he wended his way homeward, it was clearly evident that a great burden had been lifted from his heart, and that his soul was filled with heavenly peace and a noble resolution — the cause of which will be seen in what follows.]



THE BAPTISM.

THE village of Riverton was in a state of great excitement; more so than if a thunderbolt had dropped from a clear sky. In the stores, shops, and by the firesides, there was but one subject of conversation — every thing else for the time being seemingly forgotten. Never had such a thing been known in the history of that quiet and pleasant village, so unexpected and astonishing.

“Just to think of it,” said old Mrs. Testy, “that two such pillars in the churches, and influential men in society, should go and”——but here the old lady was interrupted by a knocking at the door, and we will leave the reader to imagine the conclusion of the sentence.

A few days after our two friends had closed their investigations on baptism, you might have seen two plain looking men, in earnest conversation, on their way to Riverton. They were prominent members of the Methodist and Presbyterian churches.

"Well, what do you think of the news, brother J.?" asked the Presbyterian of the Methodist friend.

"Think! why I don't believe a word of it," was the reply, in a rather excited voice. "Our two neighbors are too sensible to go over to the Baptists."

"But it is really so. Brother E. told me himself that he was going to join the Baptists. Though I expected it, yet I felt considerably shocked when he mentioned it. There is never any good comes out of these discussions on baptism. Some how, the Baptists always get the best of it, unless our ministers are there to explain the Scriptures. We can't get the people to believe that *going down into the water* and *coming up out of the water*, mentioned in the Bible, means any thing else, unless we can get our preachers to show that it does not mean what it says; but, I must confess, it's a pretty hard job to undertake."

"I do wish the people would stop talking on baptism."

"The only way to stop them is, to strike it out of the Bible; while that is so full of it, the people will talk about it."

"Why, you are not going to turn Baptist, too?"

Another thunderbolt seemed ready to fall.

"I can't tell what may take place in the future. But this I do know; I am not yet in love with the Baptists, though sorely troubled on the subject of baptism. I'll tell you what it is, there must be more in this subject than we've been taught to believe."

"There must have been something else besides baptism, to make them take the step they have: of late I have thought that brother C. was backsliding."

"Now, brother M., that's not fair," said the Presbyterian bluntly. "There is too much of that spirit manifested by all of us. Why attack an individual thus, because he changes his views on baptism and church relationship? Why not meet the issue fairly and manly? If our practices as churches won't bear investigation, the sooner we give them up the better. It's a pretty pass that we've come to, if a man can't change his opinions without being assailed by inuendoes and open charges of backsliding, etc. It shows a weak cause, and a bad spirit, when we resort to such things."

The Methodist winced under this home-thrust, and looked as if he felt ashamed of what he had said, when the Presbyterian continued:

"For my part, I thought that brother C. was one of your best members. He always took a prominent part in your meetings, and seemed very popular among you, and ever ready to defend your church."

"Well, I must admit that our members did seem to think a good deal of him. But brother E. was always so straight and sound on baptism, and ever ready with a word against immersion. That beats me: I should think you would feel rather bad to lose him!"

"I suppose that brother C. will be as great a loss to you as brother E. to us. They are both of them

men of influence, and the Baptists must have worked hard to get them, though they deny that they knew anything about it until our friends decided to unite with them."

True enough, the Baptists were taken very much by surprise when informed that Mr. E. and Mr. C. were intending to present themselves for baptism and church membership. As we have seen, the astonishment and excitement of the whole community was intense. A few scoffed, some were angry, and almost, if not quite, abusive; while others smiled knowingly. But nearly the entire community had a firm conviction of the integrity of purpose of the two candidates for baptism; believing that nothing could induce them to be baptized but love for the truth. Their sincerity was beyond question.

At length came the day of the Baptist monthly meeting. The church was crowded, and many, who had never been in such a place before, were now there. It must be confessed, however, that there were very few of the ultra oppositionists present. They manifested their displeasure by a studied avoidance of the offending brethren. The exercises of the meeting were unusually interesting—the deep, earnest devotions of the hour clearly manifesting the presence of the Master.

And now our two friends were invited to relate their experience. Mr. E. arose first, and with a trembling voice and tearful eye told how his mind

had been drawn to the investigation of baptism; how thoroughly he had been opposed to immersion and the Baptists. But God had opened his eyes, and brought him in a strange way to see his error. Deep and pungent were the feelings he had experienced; and not until he had resolved on his knees before God to humble his pride and confess his Saviour before men, had he found peace of mind. "I know, brethren," said he, "I have ridiculed and despised you; but now, if you will receive me into your fold, your people shall be my people, and your God my God." Overcome with emotion he again took his seat. But his were not the only tears seen in that assembly. The whole audience seemed profoundly moved. By a unanimous vote of the church he was joyfully received.

We need not relate the experience of Brother C. It was also deeply interesting, given in a frank and honest manner, and with a depth of feeling that convinced the audience of his sincerity and manliness. Obedience to God, and love for the Saviour, were clearly manifested in the account he gave of his change of views. He was also unanimously received.

It is now the Sabbath day—a day long to be remembered by the Baptist church of Riverton—a calm and lovely day. A large concourse of people are gathered on the banks of the river that flows not far from the meeting house. All around are to be seen carriages and wagons, while horses are tied

to every post, and tree, and fence, convenient for hitching. Such a crowd, on such an occasion, that quiet place had never before seen. It is a baptismal scene — the very spot where our two friends had witnessed the impressive ceremony a few weeks before; but little did they then think, that the next time they visited the baptismal waters it would be together for their own burial with Christ in baptism; that the same minister would lead them down into the water, and that the same sweet melody would float over the river at their baptism.

Now the pastor's voice is raised in earnest supplication for the blessing of the Master on the candidates and the assembled multitude. Then was sung the beautiful hymn:

“Must Jesus bear the cross alone,
And all the world go free?
No; there's a cross for every one,
And there's a cross for me.

“The consecrated cross I'll bear,
Till death shall set me free,
And then go home, my crown to wear,
For there's a crown for me.”

After which, Mr. E. was led down into the water, a solemn, breathless stillness pervading the assembly. With a firm step, and calm and serene aspect, the result of a consciousness of doing right, and the support of divine grace, he went into the river, and was buried with Christ in baptism; and as he came

up out of the water, his face was radiant with peace and joy.

Mr. C. then followed his example, the people singing :

“ Am I a soldier of the cross,
A follower of the Lamb ;
And shall I fear to own his cause,
Or blush to speak his name ? ”

As he came up out of the water, he gave utterance to his feelings in a burst of praise ; and “ Glory to God ! ” struck upon the ear of the listening multitude.

No pen can describe the solemnity of that scene ; no language can portray the power of God manifested on that occasion. Christ’s own seal was set in approval on that baptismal ceremony. And when the people of God, in conclusion, sent up a hymn of thanksgiving to his throne, it was with such a hearty voice, that every ear heard the joyful strain. After singing, the two brethren were welcomed with unmistakable marks of Christian friendship in their new relation to the Saviour and to the church.

The benediction was now pronounced, and the large congregation dispersed ; many to treasure up in their hearts the lessons of the day, and the influence of the scene, to return again to the baptismal waters, not as spectators, but willing followers in the footsteps of the Saviour.



AN INDEPENDENT CHAPTER.

(Not in the Original Programme.)

SEARCHING FOR THE TRUTH.

“ We are confirmed Baptists, not because we wished to be, but because truth compelled us to be.”

Such are the memorable words of that noble and devoted woman, Mrs. ANN JUDSON. Many a Pedobaptist, in searching for proof to sustain sprinkling, has been compelled to change his views on baptism, and to say the same thing. A volume might be filled with such examples. We give a few instances :

1. The case of DR. and MRS. ANN JUDSON. The following is Mrs. Judson's account :

“ When Mr. Judson was continuing the translation of the New Testament, which he began in America, he had many doubts respecting the meaning of the word *baptize*. This, with the idea of meeting the Baptists at Serampore, when he would wish to defend his own sentiments, induced a more thorough examination of the foundation of the Pedobaptist system. The more he examined, the

more his doubts increased, and, unwilling as he was to admit it, he was *afraid* the Baptists were right, and he wrong. After we arrived at Calcutta, his attention was turned from this subject. I felt afraid he would become a Baptist, and frequently urged the unhappy consequences if he should. I tried to have him give it up, and be satisfied in his own sentiments, and frequently told him if he became a Baptist, I *would not*. But he said his duty compelled him to satisfy his own mind, and embrace those sentiments which appeared most concordant with Scripture. I always took the Pedobaptist side in reasoning with him, even after I was as doubtful of his system as he. We left Serampore to reside in Calcutta, a week or two before the arrival of our brethren; and as we had nothing in particular to occupy our attention, we confined it exclusively to this subject. We procured the best authors on both sides, compared them with the Scriptures, examined and re-examined the sentiments of Baptists and Pedobaptists, and were finally compelled, from a conviction of truth, to embrace those of the former. Thus we are confirmed Baptists, *not because we wished to be, but because truth compelled us to be.*"

2. The case of PROFESSOR JEWETT.

Dr. Jewett, Professor in Marietta College, was requested by the church over which he was pastor, to preach on baptism, to silence the immersionists, and settle the wavering minds of some of his brethren.

ren. This is the result of looking after passages to sustain sprinkling :

“ Thus compelled to write, I determined to go into an original investigation of the whole matter. I began by reading Professor Stuart on *baptizo*, the ablest philological work on the subject. I was soon astonished to find in Stuart’s investigation, proof so strong, that the word in its literal sense means to *immerse, plunge, dip*. It looked as if, with this fact before him, the learned Professor ought to have become a Baptist. I entered on an investigation of the original Scriptures. I examined Josephus and the classics. The further I prosecuted my inquiries, the stronger was the evidence in favor of Baptist views.

“ I continued to apply myself to it, till I was compelled to admit, as a philologist and interpreter of the Scriptures, that *immersion*, and that only, is the baptism which Christ enjoins. I conversed with my Pedobaptist friends ; I prayed, and wept, and groaned. I would lay down the subject for weeks, then resume it again, until I was obliged, in the fear of God, to conclude, that none but believers in Jesus, have a right to the ordinances of Jesus. I am so, after a most laborious search after truth. I have acted, also, in opposition to all the prejudices of early, of classical, and theological study ; prejudices confirmed by twelve years’ connection with a Pedobaptist Church, during six of which I acted as a minister of Christ. And not only my church rela-

tions, but all my literary associations, my family connections, and my temporal interests, have combined to hold me from the result to which I have come. Those I cheerfully sacrifice to my convictions of truth and duty." Then was he immersed, and joined a Baptist church.

3. A PRESBYTERIAN MINISTER was requested by his elder to go and see his daughter, an accomplished young lady and devoted Christian, who had become unsettled in her views on baptism. So the good minister went on his errand of mercy, rejoicing in prospect of an easy conquest. To his surprise, he found her more than a match for his arguments. After requesting and obtaining another opportunity to continue the subject, he returned home, and began posting himself up. He went again, and again was foiled; his theology being somehow sadly out of joint. Studying closely her arguments, and examining her references, he concluded he had a more difficult task than he had expected, and resolved to apply himself more thoroughly to his object; and give the subject of baptism a careful and faithful investigation. The result was, his conversion to the Baptist faith. Since that time, he has been a prominent Baptist minister, walking down the path of life by the side of the estimable lady who was the first to lead him to the truth.

4. The case of REV. R. R. COON. The following instance was furnished us by a Baptist minister :

“ When I was pastor of the Baptist church at Pekin, Illinois, Rev. R. R. COON was pastor of the United Presbyterian church at Smithville, across the river, some ten miles distant. The Presbytery to which he belonged appointed him to preach their next annual sermon, and requested him to preach on baptism.

“ Mr. C. was not only a deeply pious and conscientious man, but also a very fine scholar, especially in the Greek and Hebrew languages. He commenced preparation for his sermon on baptism, and wishing to make it as thorough as possible, he carefully studied the Bible in reference to it, and was greatly surprised that the Scripture gave him no such proofs of his doctrines as he was searching for, but much of it was in direct conflict with the views of his church. He became troubled on the subject, and could not prepare the sermon to his satisfaction. The year passed away, and he went to the Presbytery and begged to be excused from preaching, as he was not prepared. His brethren excused him, but appointed him to the same service the next year. He then determined to take his Bible, and whatever light he could gain on both sides of the question, ascertain the truth, and follow it, whatever might be the consequences. Long before the year closed he was a thorough Baptist ; but being a man of remarkably kind feelings and gentle spirit,

he decided to continue with his flock until the meeting of the Presbytery, but avoided sprinkling any children. He prepared a sermon, and preached it to the Presbytery, not on the mode or subjects of baptism, but against the doctrine of sacramental efficacy as held by Catholics and Campbellites. He then asked for his letter of dismissal from the Presbytery, and came and united with my church. Subsequently he became pastor at Alton, and has filled several other important positions — a faithful, learned, devoted man and minister of Christ.”

A PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION.

I OBJECT to the Baptists, said Mr. C., one evening, because they will not allow a person to be the judge of his own baptism. We have said a good deal about baptism being “the answer of a good conscience;” but I should like to know why I have not the right to determine the manner of my baptism. The Baptists take away this right.

P. Christ has determined the mode of baptism. It is not for us to interfere with his ordinances. But I can best answer your question by supposing a case, by way of illustration :

Once on a time, Mr. CONSCIENCE QUIETENER, descanting on this subject with great vehemence, and to the apparent delight of his audience, exclaimed : “ Yes, my dear hearers, what’s the use of all this noise on baptism ? it is only ‘ the answer of a good

conscience.' What you believe and do, to you it is baptism, whether you are sprinkled, poured, or immersed; whether you are baptized with water, sand, or mud. Nay, if you can only bring your imagination, or your conscience, up to the sticking point, and believe that you have been baptized, what's the use of giving yourselves any more trouble about it? Furthermore, my dear hearers, you can't decide any thing definitely from the meaning of the word *baptize*. It had no particular meaning in the times of the apostles, and just so they employed it, and let the people do as they pleased on baptism. The apostles had no 'say' about it — they didn't know what it meant themselves; the consciences of the people settled that. So if you want to be baptized, come along, and I will accommodate you all."

At this liberal invitation, several candidates came forward for baptism.

"Well, sir," said Mr. C. Q. to Mr. A., "what is your pleasure?"

A. I want you to wash my feet. Baptize me, you know.

C. Q. Impossible! Why, that is not baptism, my friend.

A. Yes it is. Didn't you tell us in your sermon that what a man believes in is baptism? and I believe in washing feet. And then you said that baptize means to dip, pour, wash, sprinkle, dye, tinge, and I don't know how many more things

beside; and as I read about feet washing in the Bible, my conscience requires you to wash my feet.

Mr. B.'s conscience required his body washed.

Again Mr. C. Q. objected; to which Mr. B. replied :

“ Well, brother C. Q., my conscience requires it, and baptism is the answer of a good conscience. You say that baptism is a washing, and the Bible says something about the body being washed in water, so I want to have my body washed. No, no; you need not object. If the people, as you say, dictated to the apostles how to baptize, surely when we both agree that baptism is a washing, there need be no objection by you.”

And yet Mr. C. Q. hesitated, as if he did not like to undertake that job !

Then Mr. C. said :

“ Well, brother C. Q., I know you can't have any objections to my request. I want to be baptized by pouring.”

C. Q. I am glad to accommodate you, my brother.

C. Well, but — I want the water poured on my hands. That's the way I want to be baptized.

C. Q. [In blank amazement.] Ah ! — why — that's another thing.

C. Why, of course, it's not altogether according to custom, but my conscience requires it; besides, it is convenient. Water will do more good on my hands (extending them) than on my head.

Here Mr. C. Q. looked at his hands, and heartily coincided with the applicant for once.

Mr. D. wanted his body sprinkled, and Mr. E. his head, for if he had a conscience, surely it was in his head. Mr. F. wanted to be baptized kneeling in the river; and Mr. G. wanted to stand up in the river, but he must have the water poured on him from a mussel shell, for he had a picture which described that thing beautifully. Mr. H. was not particular how it was done; his conscience was easily satisfied. Besides, he had heard his minister declare it was immaterial whether a person were baptized in water, sand, or mud. And as baptism, as held by Pedobaptists, was rather a muddy question any how, he didn't know but what a little mud would be the most applicable to him. As for Mrs. I., she had the easiest conscience of all. She didn't care where or how the water was applied to her; the Bible left that an open question. It might be on the head, the face, the hands, the feet, or the body. She defied any one to show how the water was to be applied. "Yes, brother C. Q.," she continued warmly, "You're right, sir; the conscience must decide that. As you say, baptism is a pouring, a sprinkling, a wetting, a moistening, a — a — no matter, that's enough; what's the use of being over fastidious about it? But stop, let me see! as I am rather delicate, you may as well dip that branch of hyssop in the bowl, and sprinkle a few light drops in my face, or you may dip your fingers

in the bowl, and moisten my forehead. I'm not particular which ; as I said, my conscience is easily satisfied !”

After all had made known their preference, Mr. Conscience Quietener said :

“ Well, my friends, as your consciences require that I baptize you in the several ways mentioned, and believing that baptism is only the answer of a good conscience, I suppose I must gratify you ; though it is rather a novel position for me to be placed in. I could manage you all nicely but for Messrs. A., B., and D. So, Mr. A., get the water for your feet, and Mr. B., get water to wash your body in ; and be sure you both get enough. And you, Mr. H., prepare the mud for plastering ; but, my friend, for convenience sake, let me tell you that a little sand will do just as well !”

M. Brother E., you have drawn a laughable picture, but a little too much like a caricature ; after all, I guess it's pretty much the truth. Any how, my conscience is satisfied to let it pass !

THE MOTHER AND DAUGHTER.

SCENE FIRST.

“ I want to follow my Saviour and be baptized,” said a young lady to her mother. “ I feel it to be my duty to make a public profession of my attach-

ment to him, and to be numbered with his disciples in church relation."

"I have no objection to your being baptized, my daughter. Nay, I am glad to hear you express a desire for baptism. But do you understand yourself, when you talk about following Jesus? I have heard a great many talk that way; but they seem to forget that they can not follow him in all things."

"I think I do understand myself, mother. I know I can not follow Jesus in all things: that is not required. But I can follow him where he has commanded. That is what I want to do. To be a true disciple of Jesus Christ I must follow him, "and confess him before men."

"Where has he commanded you to be immersed? I find no such word in the Bible."

"True, the word immerse is not used, but baptize is, which means immersion. Neither is the word sprinkle used in the Scriptures for baptism, and you know you could not find it, though you searched a good deal for it. But Jesus was immersed; and it does seem to me that he meant immersion when he told his disciples to go and baptize, or he would not have been immersed. So I want to follow Jesus, if it is agreeable to you: I want to be buried with him in baptism."

"I have no disposition to discuss the meaning of the word now, my daughter. I see why you have been poring over those books so closely the past few

days. But to be immersed will put you to a great inconvenience."

"No more inconvenience than it did all the good women mentioned in the Scriptures who were immersed. Was it not very inconvenient for the early disciples to be Christians? but that did not prevent them following Jesus. And then that grand old Christian hero, the Apostle Paul, tells us he was buried with Christ in baptism."

"But it will certainly be more pleasant for you to be sprinkled in the church."

"What is not in obedience to Jesus can not be as pleasant to me as that which he has commanded. And then, I am called to deny myself."

"But the cross will be much easier for you to bear, if you are sprinkled. And there is no use making the cross heavier than it is."

"But, dear mother, Jesus has said, 'He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me: he that will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me: whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, can not be my disciple.' No cross, no crown. I want to take up the cross. I have no doubt grace will be given me for the time of need. As my day is, so will my strength be. So the Bible assures me."

"But you know, my daughter, that you are a delicate child; and I am afraid you will not be able to undergo all the rough usage of immersion."

“Why, I feel now I would rather die in obedience to Jesus, than live in disobedience to his commandments. I didn’t feel so once. Never fear, mother: I have never heard of immersion hurting any one yet, and I know a great many young and delicate ladies who have been immersed. Don’t you know what a frail looking creature Miss Lilly is? Well, she was immersed; and, O, her face was so beautiful when she came up out of the water! But I’m sure Jesus knew it wouldn’t hurt us, or he never would have commanded it.”

“But many of your friends will be ashamed of you, if you are immersed.”

“Well, mother, I would rather all the world would be ashamed of me than Jesus. And I had rather lose every friend I have than be ashamed of him. Has he not said: ‘For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father’s, and of the holy angels.’—Luke ix. 26.

“But you know, my child, that your father and myself were sprinkled, and should not that be sufficient for you?”

“Why, ma, did you not tell me that dear old grandpa was a member of a different church from yours, and a good Christian? But you did not think that a sufficient reason why you should join the same church. So you both belong to different churches.”

“Who has put such things into your head, my daughter?”

“No one. I have been thinking about it myself. I have heard so many parents say that their children ought to be satisfied with what they believed, I thought I would just look at it. And then I asked myself, if that is good reasoning, why did Luther and the Reformers leave the Catholic church? And why did the Presbyterians and Methodists become such?”

“You can do as you please, my daughter; but it would be more agreeable to my feelings to see you sprinkled.”

“But has not Jesus said, ‘If ye love me, keep my commandments: ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you?’ You know I love you, mother; but how could I say I loved you truly, if I were disobedient to your commands?”

“I know you love me, and you have always been an obedient daughter. I do not command you in this case; I only ask you to do it to gratify my feelings.”

“But Jesus has said: ‘He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me.’ If obedience is the test of love, how can I say I love him more than you, if I disobey his commandments? Should I be his friend, and be worthy of him then?”

“Well, my daughter, you must decide this case for yourself. If you want to be immersed, I shall interpose no objections.”

“O, thank you. I am sure *my obedience to Jesus will not lessen my love for my mother.*”

SCENE SECOND.

[*The mother alone.*]

O, my Saviour, have mercy on me, a poor, proud, rebellious creature! What have I been doing? To think that I, a Christian mother, should talk the way I did to that dear child! that I, instead of being rejoiced over her resolution to follow her Saviour, and cheering her on in the way of obedience, should try and throw obstacles in her way by talking about ease, and comfort, and convenience, and the accommodation of my feelings—as if it were not all to accommodate my pride of heart. And that, too, with a knowledge of the Bible before me. How her words cut me to the very quick. And yet I would not submit—no, though the example and command of my Saviour are so clearly revealed! I know she is right—I know I have not followed the example of Jesus. And yet I put in that weak objection—that we could not follow him in all things—as if that were reason sufficient for not following him where he has commanded. I am ashamed of myself. O, my stubborn will. Shall I still rebel? or shall I now submit? O, the cross! the cross! how can I bear it! Lord, help me. I will submit—I, too, will follow thee, blessed Jesus. And now, here upon my

knees, I offer thee, O my Saviour, a full and a complete sacrifice — thine to be forever — wholly thine.

“Thou hast said, exalted Jesus,
‘Take thy cross and follow me:’
Lord I’ll take it,
And, rejoicing, follow thee.”

A NEW AND VALUABLE WORK.

“The Constitution of the New Testament Church, Revised and Amended. With Embellishments from the Designs of Celebrated Modern Theological Artists, in accordance with Liberal Sentiments, Past Experience, Expediency, and Refinement of Taste. Printed on superb rose-colored Paper, expressly manufactured for the work, and beautifully bound, in the highest style of art. By the Rev. DIDYMUS DECENT, M.A., Professor of Liberal Christianity in the Institute of Modern Inventions for the Success of the Church. New York: Published by Twister & Co., 1868.”

(From the Christian Liberal.)

“We have glanced over the contents of this admirable work, and are highly pleased with its liberal views, and beautifully polished style of address. It is free from the imperfections found in the primitive constitution, which stood so much in the way of liberal sentiments and refined culture. The

amendments are in elegant taste, well adapted to liberal minds, and the delicate sensibilities and tender physical organizations of those who have heretofore been opposed to the harsh and indelicate usages of the Apostles. The embellishments are superb, among which we may mention, first, the Baptism of the Eunuch, where Philip, standing in the water up to his knees, in the gently flowing stream, is sprinkling water on him from a clam-shell — the eunuch's flowing robes tucked up gracefully around him.

“The second, is the baptismal scene at the river Jordan. The Jordan, in the distance, like a small silver thread, is seen winding through the wilderness; while here its banks are studded with innumerable tents; with asses, camels, and dromedaries, standing out prominently. See how life-like that camel drinking the cooling beverage; and how natural that ass, whisking off the flies with his tail! How large and true to life the humps on that dromedary, stretching his long neck over the water, and cropping the herbage on the other shore! And then, see how beautifully that smoke ascends in fantastic wreaths from the thousand fires where cook the provisions for the vast multitude, the savor of which fills the hungry man with an ardent desire for dinner. But where is John? you ask. Ah! that's the secret beauty of this grand picture — this master-piece of Pedobaptistic art. Where John is, and what he is doing, the painter has left for the

imagination to conjecture. Here he is lost among the tents, the camels, and the asses.

“We predict a ready sale for this invaluable work.”

A VAIN EFFORT.

A PEDOBAPTIST minister, engaged in teaching at a certain institution of learning, once attended Episcopal services, there being no other meeting that day in the village. The sermon was in favor of infant baptism. On returning to his place of boarding, he was questioned about the discourse. To the surprise of all, he spoke of the arguments given by the Episcopalian as very unsatisfactory: in fact, he could do better himself. To this assertion there was some dissent. That touched him a little in the quick; so he determined to show his friends that he could prove infant baptism from the Scriptures. They requested him to do so, and a time was set for him to furnish the proof. He then set earnestly to work, first exploring the Scriptures for favorable examples, and then hunting up arguments in Pedobaptist works. Somehow, the scriptural examples could not be found, and the Episcopalian had exhausted the store of Pedobaptist arguments. Soon he gave up the task as useless; but found the truth where he had least expected it. He is now a Baptist minister.

AFRAID OF HURTING HIS FEELINGS.

ONE Sabbath evening a young lady was accompanied by a Presbyterian minister to a Baptist church. It so happened that the Baptist minister, who had commenced a series of sermons on the Epistle to the Romans, had prepared a discourse on the sixth chapter, and delivered a very able sermon on the subject of baptism. The lady, like some other Baptists, was very sensitive, kept moving uneasily on her seat, and wished in her mind the subject had been any thing else but the one of the evening: being very much afraid it would hurt the feelings of her attendant, and that he would think the Baptists had nothing else to preach about but baptism. But he listened very attentively, seemingly deeply interested in the subject, which was presented to him in a different light to that in which he had been accustomed to look at it. He was astonished, and left the meeting house resolved to examine the subject to the best of his ability. He did so, discovered his error, and united with the Baptists, and is now the pastor of a Baptist church. So much for being afraid of hurting the feelings by preaching the whole truth.

ONE DROP.

“ONE drop will answer as well as an ocean.”

Precisely so, if one drop were only commanded,

and would signify the thing intended. But why did not one drop answer the Saviour's purpose? and the disciples'? and Paul's? If one drop, or one handful, had been sufficient, they would not have been immersed; neither would the Saviour have commanded immersion. They knew better what was requisite than you do. It is too late in the day for you to censure them.

But you talk, my friend, as if you wanted to see how little you can do and meet the requirement of Jesus. You do not talk from a full heart of love for, and obedience to him and his commandments. He has said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments;" but you seemingly talk from a desire to do as little as you can to satisfy the demand of the Scriptures and your own conscience. It is not, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" that prompts you; but how little can I do and secure the promised blessing? And if you could dispense with baptism, you would gladly refuse to be baptized.

"How much must I repent?" asks the sinner: "how much religion must I have to be a Christian? Won't one tear do—one act of obedience answer?" How much love and obedience is there in this? Does not the same reason prompt you both? The truly obedient heart stops not to inquire how little, or how much; but seeks to know the will of the Lord. Love to Jesus prompts it. Look down into your heart, and see if there is not a lurking desire there to shun the cross. "*Whatsoever thing I*

command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it."—Deut. xii. 32.

TAKE DOWN THE BAR.

M. Close communion prevents us from enjoying one of the dear privileges of Christians.

P. What privilege does restricted communion take away from us? Have we not the privilege of partaking of the Lord's Supper in our own churches? Why demand, as a test of friendship and union, that which requires of the Baptist all the sacrifice? We have no principle to sacrifice, but we know he has. Where is the fairness, the love, the liberality, the union, in this?

Suppose a Baptist were to come to one of our churches and say: "Brethren, I want to show my love for you by communing with you; but you have put the bar of sprinkling up against me, for your learned writers tell me you have introduced sprinkling into the church for baptism. Take it down. It seems to me you are very illiberal — preventing me from enjoying a dear privilege, and showing my love for you. As you say baptism is an indifferent thing, surely you can gratify me this much." Would we accommodate him? Not a bit. We should tell him he was a narrow-minded bigot; and if he could not step in over that bar, he might stay out. But the next Sabbath would hear us thunder-

ing away at a Baptist church, and shouting, "Take down your bar, you bigoted people! take down your bar! it deprives us of a dear privilege, and we want to show you how much we love you!"

A FRUITLESS SEARCH.

MRS. H., in P., Ill., was a very devoted Christian woman, and a member of the Dutch Reformed Church. When her twin boys were a few months old, her pastor, Rev. Mr. W., called on her, and asked when she would have her infants baptized.

She said she had not thought on the subject, but would do so, and inform him the next time he should call. She opened her Bible to refresh her mind with the account of infant baptism in the New Testament. But, to her surprise, she found nothing in reference to it, but every where read of the baptism of believers, and the whole account looked like immersion as the mode.

When her pastor called again, she anxiously inquired where she could find the Scripture passages which spoke of the baptism of infants. He replied that he would bring her a book that would instruct her on the subject. The book was brought, and carefully read—the anxious mother comparing its statements and arguments with the Bible. She soon saw very clearly that the author was attempting to teach a doctrine not taught in the Word of God.

Ere she had finished, she was a decided Baptist: and her pastor, calling to inquire when she would have her twins baptized, she told him she thought she should have to be baptized herself before they were.

Soon after this, amid much opposition from those whom she had previously counted her friends, she presented herself to the Baptist church, and was baptized.

“NON-ESSENTIAL.”

WHAT is non-essential, my friend? Do you know what you say? I am afraid not. What did Jesus say to John when he was baptized?—“Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.” And thus it becometh us to fulfill all the Saviour’s requirements. Are you better and wiser than Jesus? Did not he and his Apostles know what was as essential to the profession of a full Christian faith as you do? Did they not know how much water was necessary for baptism better than you? Do you wish to say that Jesus commanded a non-essential mode? This is really what you do say. That baptism is not essential to salvation we admit; but that immersion is not necessary to a profession of a full Christian faith, we deny, or else we say Jesus and his Apostles knew less than we do. “See that ye add not thereto, nor diminish from it.”

FOOT-PRINTS.

"I can't find any of the foot-prints of Jesus around the bowl of sprinkling."

Of course you can not; and it is all in vain for you to look for them there. The Saviour has not left his foot-prints by the bowl. If you are desirous of finding his foot-prints, go down to the water, and there you will see them. He has left them there for your example; and they call aloud unto you — "Follow me." Blessed foot-prints! enduring through all time. In vain have been the efforts of infidels and liberal Christians to obliterate them. Waves of opposition have swept over them, and human expediency has tried to bury them beneath the sand; but there they still remain, clear and distinct, as when Jesus was baptized by John in the river of Jordan.

FATHER'S ALL RIGHT ON BAPTISM.

"FATHER'S all right on baptism."

"Is that so? What does he believe in?"

"He believes in sprinkling."

"Did you ever examine the subject of baptism for yourself?"

"No; I have always taken father's word for it."

"Do you believe with your father in politics?"

"No; we differ on politics."

“Well, according to your logic, you ought to be on the same side in politics with your father.”

“But I have examined political issues for myself.”

“Ah! Probably if you were to examine the issue between immersion and sprinkling, you would not be so ready to say,—Father’s all right on baptism.”

WHAT FOR?

A NEAR neighbor of mine, at Springfield, Ill., writes a friend, had three children, who had the scarlet fever, and who died within a few days of each other.

When the first was about to die, the minister was called to baptize it. Then the second was given up as incurable, and the minister was called to baptize it. And so with the third. Three times was the minister called in to baptize the dying children. What for? Why did he not baptize them all at once, without waiting to hear first the footsteps of death? Let those answer who believe in baptizing dying children.

THAT’S SUFFICIENT FOR ME.

“So many wise and good men believe in sprinkling: that’s sufficient for me.”

“Indeed! Do you believe in Roman Catholi-

cism? There are many wise and good Roman Catholics."

"No, I can't believe in Roman Catholicism."

"Do you believe in feet washing? Many good people do."

"No, I can't go feet washing."

"Do you believe in Apostolic succession?"

"Of course not."

"Many good people do."

"Do you believe in Calvinism?"

"No, I abhor it."

"Well, a great many wise and good people are Calvinists."

"Do you believe in Arminianism?"

"Yes, I love it."

"But a great many wise and good people do not."

"A great many wise and good people have persecuted others for conscience sake. Do you believe in that?"

"Certainly not."

"Do you believe in immersion? A host of good, wise, and great men believe it."

"Why, bless you, no. There's so many wise and good people who don't believe in it; *that's sufficient for me!*"

"NO DIFFERENCE."

"It is no difference how a person is baptized, whether in sand, mud, or water." So said a Pedo-

baptist preacher. Well, my friend, if you prefer the mud you may have it; but don't, I beg of you, call it baptism. For my part, I prefer following the Saviour, and being "buried with him in baptism." I believe Paul and his brethren had the same preference. You say sand was abundant in Judea, and water rather scarce—why didn't John, Jesus, and the disciples use sand, instead of going into the water? It seems they made a difference. But there is a difference, and it is here: Jesus has commanded immersion, and nothing else. However, if you are satisfied with the sand, or with having your brow moistened by a priest, or a few drops sprinkled on you, it's your privilege; but, as I said before, don't call it baptism—an institution of the Gospel. But I may be mistaken about your meaning. Probably you meant sprinkling with water. If I am correct, you are right; for there is no difference between sprinkling with sand or water—they are both the inventions of men, and one is as good as the other.

HOW CAN I?

HERE I have lived to an advanced life, and now, how can I be immersed? And yet, the conviction of my duty presses still upon me. Many a year have I been trying to stifle that voice, and ward off conviction. But it is all useless. And then, what

will my friends think of me! — that I, a man whom they have thought immovable, and one of the strictest sort — should now be *immersed*? Can't I get along without doing it? How should I feel and look now to go down into the water! But these convictions must be stifled, or I shall have no peace. And yet, shall I violate my convictions of duty and deny my Saviour? What shall I do? Hark! that voice again: "If ye love me, keep my commandments." "He that knoweth his Master's will, and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes." O, I deserve them all — I have denied my Lord. Shall I, then, still resist that voice? No, I will yield, come what may. I will arise and be baptized, and confess my Saviour. Peace, peace at last! O joy, joy! I have obtained the victory!

"I AM SATISFIED."

"Do you know you have been baptized?"

"Yes, my father told me so."

"Then you have no personal knowledge of it?"

"No; I was an unconscious babe when it was done."

"You could not believe, then?"

"No; my parents believed for me."

"And you had no choice, of course?"

"No, I couldn't help it. They acted for me."

"Are you a member of any church?"

"Yes."

"When did you join?"

"When I was an infant."

"How?"

"My parents baptized me into the church."

"Of course, it was not on the profession of your faith?"

"No, I had no faith about it. My parents believed, and chose my church relationship for me."

"Have you ever had any change of heart?"

"What do you mean?"

"Have you ever been converted?"

"Converted! Yes, I was converted when I was baptized. That is all the conversion I know about."

"Are you satisfied?"

"I ought to be; my parents and the minister have told me it was all right."

"Have you examined the Scriptures for yourself?"

"No; what's the use of troubling my mind about a matter that satisfied my parents and the preacher?"

"Will you look at a few passages if I give them to you?"

"Why, I don't know that I have time to attend to it. The minister and my parents searched the Scriptures for me. They knew all about the Scriptures, I suppose."

"Will you take this tract and read it?"

"What is it about?"

"Regeneration and Baptism."

"Much obliged to you, but I don't care about

investigating the subject now. My conscience is satisfied."

TAKE UP THY CROSS.

"THE disciple is not above his Master." "True, Lord, and why should I be above Thee—above following Thee? Why should I allow my pride to prevent me from taking up my cross, and confessing Thee before men? O my rebellious heart! O my self-will! Lord help me to conquer—to be Thy true disciple! I will deny myself—I will take up the cross. But O, the cross is so heavy to bear; I am afraid I shall sink beneath the load."

Never fear, O trembling one! grace will be given thee; God will be thy strength—He will keep thee. And then look at the promised reward: "Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven."

"Jesus, I my cross have taken,
All to leave and follow Thee;
Naked, poor, despised, forsaken,
Thou, from hence, my all shalt be.
Man may trouble and distress me;
'Twill but drive me to Thy breast:
Life with troubles hard may press me;
Heaven will bring me sweeter rest."

A CONTRAST.

ONE year ago, if the reader had looked into the First Baptist Church of Chicago, he would have seen an immense body of delegates, from nearly every part of the Union, ministers and laymen, mutually engaged in promoting the interests of the Baptist churches, in the home and foreign missionary work, the bible cause, the publication of religious literature, etc.; all working together harmoniously for the promotion of the general good.

And then, if he had looked into the Methodist Episcopal Church of Chicago, one year later, he would have seen a large body of Methodist preachers, called the General Conference, making laws and regulations for the government of Methodists, with not one solitary layman participating. And then, again, if he had looked into the same building, one evening during the session of said General Conference, he would have seen a large convention of delegates, clamorous for lay representation, and denouncing the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church as an aristocracy.

THE DIVINE PATTERN.

“THOU shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.”

How exact! How strict the injunction! It is

the pattern of infinite wisdom, and skill, and goodness. It can not be improved by man's ingenuity. It's for all nations and all time. See ye touch not the ark.

"I SETTLED MY DOUBTS."

"I had been long troubled in my mind about having been baptized. To be sure I had been sprinkled; but that did not satisfy me. So I settled my doubts by being immersed."

That's the way. No trouble about the mode of baptism in the minds of those who have followed Jesus. That settles the question forever.

OBEDIENCE TO GOD.

"It is better to obey God than man." Such is the manly and noble declaration of Peter. Men may require, have required, things harsh, cruel, and unjust; but God never. Men have failed in their promises; but God's Word is sure and abiding. Men may forsake us in times of great distress, when the billows go over our soul; but he has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." It is better to obey God, because he is our Judge, not only once right, but always right, true, merciful

and just, and in keeping his commandments there is great reward. Here is good anchorage—let us anchor. “My sheep know my voice and they follow me,” says Jesus, “and I will give unto them eternal life, and none shall pluck them out of my hands.”

“FOLLOW THOU ME.”

“How far, Lord?”

“Observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.”

“I will try and be obedient, blessed Jesus.”

“If ye love me, keep my commandments.”

BAPTIST TESTIMONY.

OUR Presbyterian seems more inclined to quote Pedobaptist than Baptist testimony. Some of the ablest scholars in the world have been Baptists—certainly not excelled by Pedobaptists. On baptism their voice is a united testimony. Dr. T. J. CONANT, who stands the highest in the rank of modern biblical writers, has investigated the use of the word *baptize* in all known cases of Greek literature, and given to the public, both in the original and translation, the fruit of his vast labors. He says: “These examples are drawn from almost every department

of literature and science. * * * From the earliest age of Greek literature, down to its close (a period of about two thousand years), not an example has been found in which the word has any other meaning [than its ground meaning]. There is no instance in which it signifies to make a partial application of water by *affusion*, or *sprinkling*, or to *cleanse*, to *purify*, apart from the literal act of immersion as the *means* of cleansing or purifying. It expressed this act alone either literally or in a metaphorical sense."

MORE THAN THEE.

"IF a man love father or mother more than me, he is not worthy of me."

More than Thee, blessed Jesus! No; though I do love father and mother dearly, yet Thou art the fairest among ten thousand—the one altogether lovely. Thou shalt have the first place in my heart, and happy shall I be if at last I am counted worthy to enter in through the gates into the city, and to hear Thee say, "Well done."

TO AND INTO.

"HALLO, Sambo, you come here! Did I not tell you not to go into the river to swim, or the aligators would snap you up?"

“La, Massa, I hain’t bin into the riber at all.”

“How’s that? Chuffee told me you’d been a swimming.”

“Won’t you b’lieve the Bible ’fore Chuffee, massa?”

“Of course; but what has the Bible to do with it?”

“Didn’t massa Presbyterian say last Sunday dat goin’ into de riber means to de riber? Ob course dis darkey couldn’t swim on dry land!”

ONE THING AT A TIME.

“HAD you not better join our church, it will help you?”

“No, sir, I can not. The first thing I must attend to is the salvation of my soul.”

“But you can try us, and we will try you; and if you do not like us, you can withdraw.”

“I am unworthy church-membership—I am an unconverted man. And then, such a course would be contrary to my views of the Scriptures. They talk of believing in Jesus first—of conversion—before church membership. Is it not said that the Jailor, and Cornelius, and Lydia, and Paul, and those on the day of Pentecost, believed, were converted and baptized before uniting with the church? ‘They that gladly received his Word were baptized, and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.’ Thus, if I understand the

Scriptures, conversion and baptism come before church membership."

"Some Baptist has been talking with you."

"No, sir, these are my serious convictions from reading the Bible. I know I want to be a Christian; but I have not yet gladly received his Word. I must have the question of my acceptance with Jesus settled first. Baptism and church membership are nothing to me now compared with this. I want to commence right. I want first the pearl of great price. One thing at a time, and my soul's salvation first. But you ask me to reverse the Bible order — to commence at the wrong end. If Jesus in mercy should accept of me, then, I trust, I shall be willing to be baptized and unite with some Christian church that carries out the divine plan!"

WE THINK SO.

AN anxious Presbyterian inquirer after the truth, after searching the Bible in vain for a passage to prove sprinkling, went to her pastor for assistance. She pressed him for one passage, to which he replied: "There is none you would understand so without a great education. It requires extensive learning to understand sprinkling for baptism." We think so too.

“FULL DISCIPLES.”

“I WANT to be a *full disciple*,” said a Burmese convert, when she asked to be immersed. That’s it; it has the right ring in it. Let us try and be “full disciples,” and follow our blessed Master wherever he requires. Let our song be :

“Through floods and flames, if Jesus leads,
I’ll follow where he goes !”

I WON’T.

I WON’T go to the Jordan, said Naaman the Syrian, and went away from the prophet in a rage. “Are not the rivers of Abana and Pharpar, waters of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?” Why couldn’t the prophet have brought out a little water and sprinkled it on me, instead of sending me all the way to the Jordan? What’s the use, I should like to know? And then, to be dipped seven times if I do go! Why won’t once dipping do? nay, why will not a little of the Jordan sprinkled on me answer just as well? But Naaman had to go to the Jordan, and to be dipped seven times. Why? Because God had commanded it, and nothing else would answer; and in obedience to God’s command came the desired blessing.

“I won’t be immersed — I won’t go to the river,”

says another; "is not the water in the bowl just as good as the water in the river?" But, says Jesus, "If ye love me keep my commandments." He commands *immersion*, not sprinkling. And that is just the difference between the water in the river, and the water in the bowl!

A BAPTIST BIBLE.

THE daughter of a Presbyterian elder, on opening her father's new Bible, and reading, "went down into the water," "came up out of the water," etc.; suddenly broke out in astonishment: "Why, this is a Baptist Bible, pa! did you not know it?"

ONLY ONE PASSAGE.

SAID a young lady to her mother: "Ma, I find many places in the Bible which tells of their baptizing as the Baptists do; won't you take the Bible and show me a passage that tells of their baptizing as the Presbyterians do?" The mother searched the Scriptures, but could not find the place exactly; so she applied to an elder. The elder was equally puzzled. Then she applied to her pastor. He seemed also at a loss to find one, and told her to try and stop the inquisitiveness of her daughter. She was not much satisfied with this, and continued

searching for the proof of sprinkling, but — came out of the investigation a Baptist.

I'LL TAKE THE GENUINE COIN.

“HERE, my son, are two pieces of coin, said by some to be of equal value. You can have one: take your choice.”

“I'll take this one; it looks smooth and nice, and I like the design better. The other is rough and unpolished.”

“But what you call the rough one, I know to be the genuine coin. The other I am not so certain about.”

“I will risk it; it is certainly more attractive in appearance than the other.”

So he took it; but it was base metal, notwithstanding its polished surface.

And thus it is with many who favor sprinkling. They submit to it, and risk its being a counterfeit, because they think it more pleasant to the eye.

“I admit,” says another Pedobaptist, “that there are several clear and undoubted cases of immersion recorded in the Scriptures. The cases I claim as examples of sprinkling, are, to say the most, doubtful; but sprinkling is more agreeable to my feelings and pleasant to look at. I will risk the genuineness of the coin, although it may be a counterfeit.”

“But,” says the Baptist, “I will take the coin

you are pleased to call rough looking. One genuine piece is worth more to me than ten million counterfeits. I know that coin—it is from the divine mint. Listen; it's got the right ring in it; and see, there's the Master's likeness on it. There is no doubt of that coin's genuineness."

ANOTHER FACT.

THE BIBLE AGAINST THE METHODIST.

A WRITER, in a tract printed by the Methodist Tract Society, entitled "Twenty-four Facts on Baptism," gives the following as one of his facts:

"It is *a fact*, that our Saviour was praying when he was baptized, (a fact often overlooked,) most likely on his knees; and as the water fell from the hands of the administrator, the Spirit, of which it was emblematical, descended upon him. (Luke iii. 21.)"

A little curious to examine this Methodist *fact*, we took our Bible and read his reference. "Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him." Luke iii. 21, 22.

Then we turned to Matthew and Mark, and read: "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up

straightway out of the water ; and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him. Matt. iii. 16. “Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descend on him.” Mark i. 10.

After reading the above, we concluded on

ANOTHER FACT.

“*It is a fact,*” that the writer of the above knew nothing about what he was writing, or he would not so glaringly have *contradicted the Scriptures.*

IMPOSING ON COMMON SENSE.

“SPEAKING of imposing on common sense,” said Mr. C. one evening, when in conversation with his Methodist friend, “reminds me of the following incident:

“‘You want to impose on my common sense,’ said a friend to a zealous Pedobaptist, who was trying to win him over to his peculiar views.

“‘How so?’ inquired the Pedobaptist.

“‘Why, you would have me believe that sprinkling is baptism, when you admit that John baptized by immersion, and that Jesus, Paul, and the Eunuch

were immersed. You would have me believe that they all went to the trouble of going down into the water, when you say sprinkling would have done as well.

““ You ask me to believe that the Saviour and his Apostles used language that the people, then and now, can not understand, when they talked about baptism.

““ Your writers [Pedobaptist] tell me that immersion was the primitive baptism, and that pouring and sprinkling are human inventions, and yet you ask me to deny the ordinance of God, and subscribe to the institutions of men !

““ You want me to subscribe to an article of faith in your church which says Christ *instituted immersion, pouring, sprinkling, and infant baptism*; and that these conflicting modes were practiced by the Apostles.

““ You tell me you don't believe in Baptism being a saving ordinance, and yet you baptize dying children.

““ You want me to believe that you are less bigoted than the Baptists, when you have fined and imprisoned them, and nailed up their meeting-houses, because they could not believe that sprinkling babes was baptism; and if possible you wont let your children hear a sermon on immersion, attend a baptismal scene, nor go to any other church.

““ I hear you denounce the close communion of the Baptists, and yet how often do you commune with open communion churches? Don't, I pray you, try to impose on my common sense any more.”

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